

The Snow Country Hunting Life of the Northern Nobleman and the Raptor Wife 北欧貴族と猛禽妻の雪国狩 り暮らし

Volume 3 - The Northern Nobleman and the Raptor Wife's Village, Great Renovation Plan!?

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Chapter 108 - Ritzhard's New Challenge!

Today, mother was working hard from the morning again.

She made breakfast with Ruruporon, sang lullabies to Arno while making jam, processed the fish Sieg caught into dried food and returned to work after lunch.

After I started living with mother, I unexpectedly could not handle the free time I had. Even when I offered help, she told me to rest. I pointed out that she was overworking, but mother said that it was normal.

When I asked Sieg to say something to mother, she made a troubled expression.

According to her, mother and I are very alike.

I'm not fluffy and buoyant like mother! When I said that, Sieg turned her gaze and stared elsewhere.

When I listened what she wanted to say, she pointed out that both mother and I are hard workers who do not realise it ourselves, apparently.

N~n, hard worker, eh?

Well, that's all fine, since she now had some leisure in our lives.

I thought of starting new, so I pulled out something that bothered me for a few years from the study, which are father's research papers.

On the cover, 'Beekeeping in the Snow Country' was written.

Beekeeping is raising bees for honey and wax. According to father's research, the land here is the northernmost point of the habitat of bees.

In the village, honey is thought of something that is imported from outside.

There are quite a few beehives in the forest, but people don't bother them since trying fight bees only hurt them.

There probably are many villagers that have never had honey. It's very tasty, how unfortunate.

Personally, I like honey very much.

Pouring honey after placing butter to melt over fresh warm bread or cake, placing plenty of honey inside crispy scones, even adding honey to warm milk is great. The soft sweetness is unbearable.

Even so, most of the times I had honey was at grandfather's place.

Sometimes, I get beehives from Teoporon, but just how is he collecting them? It's a mystery.

I'm thankful that he's offering me precious honey, but I didn't how to process beehives so there were quite a few times I ended up wasting the honey and wax inside.

When I return home after being able to have honey anytime at grandfather's place, I sometimes missed the luxurious life at the foreign country.

With the money needed for buying honey, many other things can be bought. On that line of thought, it felt wasteful to buy honey from visiting merchants.

So when I discovered in the study that father had written something about beekeeping I felt happy.

However, when I read it, there were many bothersome processes which I did not have the leisure for so I had them tucked away.

Years passed. I met Sieg and married her and had children. Mother came back too, so now I had some leisure time in my life.

Now might be the time to challenge beekeeping.

Father's paper had information on beekeeping with words and pictures together. It was very easy to understand.

To collect honey, a hive has to be set in the forest in early spring, and then wax scent and sugar water has to be placed inside to lure the bees. If they feel that the place is better than their hives, they move in.

The honey collecting is done after the snow melts in spring.

Unexpectedly, the honey can be collected until autumn. In winter, they do other things to survive the winter. Surprisingly, bees can survive the winter.

I started spending time on learning the art of beekeeping, organising the budget spendings. I checked how many beehives there were in the forest and made blueprints, proceeding smoothly with my plans.

For starters, I reported it to my family.

“—— And so, I’m planning on beekeeping.”

I reported the new challenge I took up with the references I prepared, but Sieg and mother did not look that pleased.

They were worried about the stings the bees.

“Ritchan, it will be bad if you got stung by a bee~”

“Don’t worry. Bees are creatures that don’t attack first.

Bees are very docile, gentlemanly, or should I say sincere insects.

They won’t attack as long as I don’t move too much.

Bees only get aggressive when something happens to their home or if they’re being forced to do something.

Honeybees are docile and craven, so if one approaches in a benign manner they won’t attack. As long as I am cautious, there’s nothing to be afraid of.

When I explained earnestly, Sieg and mother accepted it in the end.

From the next day, I set about making the hives.



Beekeeping begins in early spring.

It’s autumn now, so the plan has to be suspended for a bit.

Meanwhile, I decided to try some other business.

Even so, I did not have any inspirations. My head was blank, so I decided to consult Sieg.

“Hey, Sieg, I have something I want to talk about.”

“What is it?”

I explained to her about the new business.

I told her that I wanted to open a store that can be run during the depressing polar nights.

“I thought that it would be a nice idea.”

After thinking hard, I thought up a café where people can play games, but it was somewhat strange.

It's not just the villagers that get depressed, but also the soldiers in the fort.

During the polar nights (kaamos) everything is dyed dark, that even people's hearts seem to be dyed in black.

“Sieg, what did you do for leisure in the military?”

“Let's see.....”

She said that soldiers did not have that much leisure as they had strict discipline.

She just went out on strolls to the park on holidays, or played tennis with her nephew Claus.

“I heard that sports are good to refresh oneself.”

But still, playing sports in the snow-filled polar nights is a bit hard.

“Other than that, I visited pubs once a month.”

“!”

Pub! That’s it!

A store that has simple dishes and alcohol might be good for make people happy.

“Pub! That might work!”

“But wasn’t it hard to purchase food during the polar nights?”

“Ah!”

That’s true.

During the polar nights, we spend the time quietly on preserved food.

We have our lives, so it will be hard to open stores.

For the fund, I was thinking of using the gold bars I received from grandfather.

However, even if I had money, merchants don’t visit during the polar nights.

“I thought that opening a pub would be a good idea~”

“.....”

While I was hanging my head in disappointment, Sieg raised her voice in exclamation.

When I wondered what it was, she told me that there’s something good.

“Ritz, try canned food.”

“Canned food?”

Canned food is processed food stored in airtight metal cans which are then sterilised for long-term storage.

When she was training in the mountains, she explained that canned food was used for rations.

“Hehh, there’s something like that~”

In Sieg’s country, there are also ones for civilian ones.

We had left everything regarding meals to the cooks, so I did not have the opportunity to visit the markets for that.

“Come to think of it, I never saw them here.”

“Right.”

Here, merchants don’t sell canned foods.

Someone once brought them, but they did not sell well as the villagers had their pride in making preserved food.

“Canned food is not something I actively seek out, but it might become very tasty after some work.”

“I see!”

Canned food.

Will it be the product that will save the village?

First, I decided to consult a merchant and see if I could buy them.

Chapter 109 - Canned Food War! — First Half

Canned food is food preserved in tin cans by removing the air inside and sterilising the can to prevent the food from spoiling, for long-term storage.

It seems that they were originally made for solving food problems in the military.

Apparently, seeing soldiers from collapsing from getting ill from spoiled food and getting malnutrition from not getting fresh food, a foreign King offered great rewards for a solution, which led to the creation of canned food.

In the early stages, the cans were opened by heating the soldered lids, which sounds rather cumbersome. Decades later, new types of cans, which can be opened easily by using hammer and chisel, were invented.

When I told mother about the pub and the canned food, she agreed.

“If there’s canned food, we won’t have to struggle so much before the polar nights (kaamos).”

I hadn’t thought of the price, but I am thinking that it would be nice if the advantages of canned food were taught in the pub and the canned food spread to stores.

The low birth rate problem of the village is dire. We might be filled only with old people in the future. Then, canned food will prove to be very useful.

“Tomorrow, a merchant will bring some.”

“Hehh, I see~”

Mother was listening in a buoyant manner, but maybe because she thought of something, she suddenly made a serious expression.

“What’s wrong?”

“Canned food, Ritchan, canned food you say.....”

Mother twirled her fingers on the table as if to draw something, but I could not tell what she was trying to draw.

When I handed her paper and pen, she drew something that was like bread that had risen. In the middle on the can, there was a drawing of fish.

And then she asked with a trembling voice.

“C-Could canned food be this!?”

“Erm, sorry, I never saw canned food before.”

“I-I see.”

“Sieg should know, so I’ll call her over.”

Sieg took Arno to the room to lull him to sleep. He might be asleep by now.

A few minutes later.

After seeing the picture of the canned food mother drew, Sieg tilted her head.

“Linde-chan, is this the canned food you know?”

“The canned food I know aren’t inflated like this.”

“R-Really!?”

Sieg drew canned food on the paper.

Maybe because her drawing skills weren’t that good, the picture was not that different from the inflated can mother drew.

“Hmm, is it different~?”

“I’m sorry, mother-in-law. My drawing skills are not good.”

Well, the shape is fine. More importantly, I asked why mother was so afraid.

Mother started talking about her experience from the decade of travelling the world.

“Was it soon after we left? At a port of the neighbouring country, they were selling canned food.”

She was thinking of dining at a restaurant, but father took interest in the canned food sold at the port. The shape was peculiar so it interested him, or so.

“The container was swollen up, like risen bread.”

Sieg said that she never saw such canned food. Father thought that it might be a defective product, but when he asked the shopkeeper the reply was that it was normal.

The content of the can was herring. ‘Surströmming’ or so it was called. Inside, there’s herring pickled in salt.

“Daddy thought that the inflated can was interesting, so he started saying that he wanted to eat it.....”

He asked the shopkeeper how it is meant to be eaten. The fish first has to be washed with spirits. Then, along with steamed potatoes, pickled vegetables and sour cream, it should be wrapped in a chewy flatbread called ‘tunnbröd’. After buying bread and vegetables the store decided to have the food in the park.

“Daddy had hammer and chisel, while I was holding the can down.....”

The moment the chisel was driven into the can, the stench spread. It was so strong that made her cry, mother recalled with a sad expression. Apparently the fish has a deathly stench.

“Really, the tears didn’t stop for an hour.”

Father also thought that it was rotten, so he went to the store to get it refunded. However, the canned food was not rotten, but fermented. It was food that had a strong smell yet was tasty, so it was loved by some of the inhabitants.

“Still, no~ matter, no~ matter what we tried, we couldn’t dare have it, so we gave it to a person at the store for them to eat.”

“.....”

“.....”

Mother affirmed that ‘surströmming’ was the most pungent food she ever had. She said that it smelled dozens times worse than rotting food scraps.

On top of that, unfortunately, the smell did not go away from the clothes and the luggage.

“I think that the villagers can’t have that canned food.”

“O-Of course.”

Even that tolerant mother has food she abhors. ‘Surströmming’.

I vowed to not buy it even if a merchant brought it.

Of course, rotten, I mean, fermented herrings are not called there is to canned food. Sieg explained that the canned food she had during her days in the military were not ‘surströmming’.

Sieg persuaded mother that she had nothing to worry about.

I even promised to do the tasting first.

“There could something father wrote about canned food in his study~”

“I see. I’ll search for it.”

“Sorry if there aren’t any.”

“It’s alright.”

As mother said, there was a research paper on canned herring.

I had thought he was rather calm, but unexpectedly he does not like to just go over it.

According to the research paper, ‘surströmming’ was to be made with herring caught in spring, as per the king’s decree.

It is made by putting herrings in a container of salt water, leaving them in for two months for fermenting. Before cans were introduced, they seemed to have been made in barrels.

As for reason why the cans swell up, they are produced without heating for steriliastion, so that the fermenting process can continue, creating gas.

As to why they did not properly salt and heat the food, they did not have enough sunlight to create salt, and they lacked fuel such as firewood even for heating, so they had to resort to such means of making fermented food.

This was also precious food for soldiers during times of war, apparently.

Not rotten, but fermented, ‘surströmming’.

When I read the paper, I felt like eating —— of course not.

For the peace of the village, I vowed to never touch them.



The next day, a merchant brought about a dozen different kinds of canned foods.

I was wary of ‘surströmming’, but I could not find any canned food with the labels in the language of the neighbouring country.

I asked the merchant about that. Apparently, pickled herring can be bought at cheap prices, but they’re not bought since it’s not well-received outside of that country. I thought that it was a wise decision.

All the canned foods are imported from overseas. Unfortunately, I couldn’t read the words. I thought that I would just have to make by with the pictures, but Sieg said that she can read some.

“There’s beef, fruits, vegetables, and also condensed milk, it seems.”

“Condensed milk?”

It seems that the big can had dairy. Sieg, looking at it for the first time, held up the can and read the information written on it.

“It seems like it’s milk concentrated with sugar.”

“Hehh, canned dairy might be nice!”

I bought everything the merchant brought. They were expensive since they were imported goods, but I convinced myself that people have to spend money to keep the economy going as I purchased them.

The merchant said that there will be a discount of 20% if I bought in large bulks. I felt thankful for that.

I paid the money and parted ways with the merchant.

Seeing the cans on the table, I felt excited.

To be able to buy preserved food with money, I had never imagined that would be possible.

“This is rather exciting.”

“Well, I don’t think it will be that amazing though.”

“I see.”

First, we have to confirm if the canned foods are delicious.

Tonight, the Rango family is resting, so our dinner will consist of canned foods.

Chapter 110 - Canned Food War! — Second Half

Mother prepared dinner.

Vegetable soups with plenty of root vegetables, triangular cheese pie made with potato and bacon, white fillet fish and mushroom grilled with herbs and butter. In the basket, there were thinly sliced rye bread.

After praying to the spirit, we started eating.

Since it had become very cold in the past few days, the warm soup healed the body greatly. The simple taste of vegetables boiled for a long time was good.

The triangular pie was split into two with a knife so that we can share.

The crust was crispy! The cheese was thi~ck, the potatoes were soft, and the bacon full of pepper was just irresistible.

The white fillet fish and the grilled mushrooms were eaten with bread. Fish from early autumn have plenty of fat so they're very tasty. I think that the combination of buttered mushrooms, fish and bread is justice.

"Ritchan, is it good?"

"Delicious."

"How glad~"

She asked a similar question to Sieg and smiled happily.

It was a peaceful dinner table.

After dinner, we started tasting the canned foods.

While mother was lulling my son, I took out the canned foods from the shelf.

Sieg silently stared at the cans laid out on the table.

It seems that they look different from the ones she had from her days in the military.

The ones we bought from the merchant are ones that just started getting mass-produced. They're products made with the latest technology.

"Sieg, what do you have in the military?"

"....."

Sieglinde suddenly made a sour expression.

Oh no, how wonderful!! No, I mean, I apologised if I shouldn't have brought it up, but she said it was alright.

"The food in the military was terrible."

Combat rations are foods that can be stored for long periods of time over great distances, that the food was more for getting the nutrients quickly rather than for enjoying meals, or so she said.

"Our main diet was hard bread called hardtack....."

Made with flour and water, the hardtacks were also called 'iron plate crackers'. They're small biscuits smaller than one's hand, but they had a scary solidity, probably hard enough to block bullets.

There were also canned baked beans, cans of fried nuts, coffee and black tea, but since they were all made with low funds they were mostly disappointments.

Sieg bitterly said that the food in the military were extremely disappointing.

Even in the dining halls the food was just warm, not too different from the food she had in the field, Sieg recalled with a sad expression.

If it didn't hurt her diet too much, she even had just canned food in her room, she said.

“Back then, just opening a can was hard.”

Of course, there are no tools to open cans on the fields of battle. So, apparently, she had to open them with her sword.

“So, I was surprised to see these.”

Sieg was staring at the part attached on the cans with a serious expression.

I heard from the merchant that they are called ‘winding keys’. The shape is similar to the clock keys.

Apparently, by winding the notch attached to the can, the can can be opened easily.

“They invented something great overseas.”

“Indeed.”

The age of opening cans through force is over, Sieg was murmuring.

Also, she murmured that it was really fortunate that she came here.

“If I had rejected the marriage, I might have been having cold canned food along in the barracks.”

“N-No way!”

How nice.....

It really was nice that I met Sieg at the ball.

“The battlefields were very desolate.”

“Uu, Sieg!”

Maybe because she remembered the painful days in the military, Sieg made a melancholy expression. She looked sad, so I hugged her tightly.

Sieg silently accepted my embrace.

“The food here was dreamy. The reindeer meat that foreigners apparently can’t handle was very delicious too.”

“I’ll continue to prepare great food!”

“Thank you, Ritzhard.”

I never knew that the diet in the military was that bad. It was unimaginable for me.

Come to think of it, when I first met Sieg she was much thinner.

I have to give her even more delicious meals and make her put on some weight, I thought as I patted her head.

“This really is paradise. It is breathtakingly beautiful, the food is great, my husband and child are cute, and my mother-in-law is diligent and kind.”

“.....Yeah.”

I felt as though I heard me being included in the list of cute things, but I just thought that I just misheard.



To change the mood, we started trying the canned foods.

Today, we are opening corned beef, which is meat cured in salt.

It seems that these are being mass-produced in a foreign country, and are a hit product.

Since I didn't have beef that much, I was excited.

We decided to quickly open the keyed can.

I grabbed the key attached on the notch at the side of can, and wound it around the can to open the can. Inside, there was a lump of meat.

Since it could be opened easily, it was good for elderly people and children too.

Corned beef is beef cured with large grains of salt, and then sliced into small pieces, after which they are spiced.

In foreign countries, it seems that they usually don't slice the beef beforehand.

Sieg recalled that Sieg sometimes had corned beef as a part of her combat rations.

"They're not that delicious. They were greasy and the smell was hard to bear."

"I see~"

I placed the beef on a dish. Even if they were split into many pieces, there was quite the proper chunk.

I sliced some with a knife and had some.

".....Mm."

Well, it wasn't especially delicious. As Sieg said, it tasted like meat processed in salt and grease.

Thought I thought that it was amazing how it didn't have a strong taste like wild game. Indeed, it was meat from livestock.

Sieg said that they were much tastier than the ones she had in the military.

I got it!

“Well, if we cook it, it might become delicious, I think?”

“Indeed.”

It was rather salty, so I thought that it would go well with potatoes. After adjusting the flavour slightly, it might be nice to grill them with cheese.

I decided to try it out right away at the fireplace.

I brought a pot, potatoes and spices from the kitchen and started cooking.

The potatoes were chopped finely so that they could be cooked easily then were cooked until they were crispy. Afterwards, I added in diced corned beef. After adding a bit of salt and pepper, the whole thing was done.

First, I tasted the thing myself.

“Ah, as I thought, potatoes go well with it!”

Since it was unexpectedly delicious, I recommended Sieg to have some as well.

“I can’t believe that such a taste comes from corned beef.”

Nice. Sieg also said that it was delicious.

Afterwards, we had fish, oysters preserved in oil and other things, but unexpectedly all of them were rather nice.

It seems like we can have canned foods.

I checked the period for how long the canned foods could be stored, which was three years.

I thought that these might change the lifestyle of us hunting people.

Since we could take care of the food, the next problem was deciding on the spot for the pub.

Well, I am the lord, so I can build wherever I want though.

If possible, I'm thinking of somewhere near the square or the gift store. For that, I have the consult the shop lady and her husband.

First, building an establishment with a cellar is the top priority.

While consulting Captain Artonen, I wrote down the plans for the pub on a paper.

Every time something was decided, I reported to Sieg and mother.

I told Sieg the contents of today's discussion.

"Come to think of it,"

"Nn?"

"Did you decide on a name for the pub?"

I completely forgot about it.

Store name, eh.....

"How about 'Wonderful Sieglinde'?"

"Rejected."

"....."

As I thought. But I think it's a great name.

Even when I asked if she had a good idea, she merely crossed her arms and frowned without moving. It seems that she couldn't think up anything good.

“Then, how about ‘The Crimson Eagle’?”

“.....”

“Well, hey, when it’s the tourist season, Sieg’s fan ladies might come over?”

“.....Well, then,”

“Alright?”

Sieg looked sour, but accepted in the end.

Frontier pub ‘The Crimson Eagle’.

Yup, it’s a great name!

Chapter 111 - Remote Land Pub Plan!

The plan for the pub gradually proceeded.

The location of the establishment is next to the gift store. Fortunately, the shop owner and her husband welcomed us.

The building was being raised smoothly.

The craftsmen of the village were doing well.

The store was to a wooden single storey building, and I am planning on painting the roof white and the walls blue.

Since there are many red houses in the village, I wanted it to stand out and I wanted it to be in the colour Sieg likes.

It would be finished two months later.

I want to open it before the polar nights (kaamos).

The polar nights will come about three months later.

Buying alcohol and canned foods, designing the interior, thinking up the menu, there was a mountain of work to do.

Thinking that it would be nice if it could become a place where people can spend the depressing polar nights happily, I did my best every day.



In our bedroom, after our son went off to sleep, we made rustling noises under faint light.

Presents arrived from Sieg's family. Three large wooden boxes.

A box of potatoes and a box of apples. In the other box, according to father-in-law, there are many miscellaneous goods.

“The apples are harvested in this period.”

“I see~”

There are no apples around this area, so I was not used them. Apparently, father-in-law had been growing them in a corner of the ranch.

Sieg handed me an apple. It seems like it was alright for me to try it.

After thanking her, I took a bite.

“——Uwah, sour!!”

Since I would wake Arno, I quickly covered my mouth.

Sieg burst out into laughter.

“Isn’t this too sour?”

“Sour you say.”

I gave her the half-eaten apple and told her that it was really sour.

But unexpectedly, my wife had the sour apple without changing her expression.

“Eh, it’s not sour?”

“No, not really.”

“That can’t be~”

“It’s just normal and delicious.”

“N~n.”

While we were talking about that, a memory from a year ago became clearer in my head.

“Ah!”

I remembered.

We had apples in a foreign port.

That was a year ago. On that day, we discovered that Sieg was pregnant.

Pregnant women like sour food.

“Liking sour food, c-could it be!?”

“No, I don’t think so.”

“!?”

“I did enjoy sour apples from a long time ago.”

“Ah, really?”

“Sorry.”

“N-No.”

Oops, I’m being greedy, to be hoping for a second child. Furthermore, giving birth puts great strain on the mother. She still has to rest.

Just having Arno born is a miracle already.

While I was kneeling down on the floor and feeling crestfallen, Sieg patted me.

She had a troubled expression, so I quickly explained.

“Ah, sorry! Erm, I’m not being disappointed, but I’m just embarrassed of myself should I say

I confessed what I was thinking in a frail voice.

Then, Sieg tightly grasped my hand.

When I looked up at the face in alarm, she had a soft smile on her face.

“It would be nice if we could have a second child.”

“!”

Unexpectedly, Sieg told me a wonderful wish.

The moment I heard that, I thought of hugging her and kissing her, but she promptly turned around and headed back for the luggage, to open the third box.

My outstretched hands flailed in the air and from that momentum I slipped and banged my forehead on the floor.

Both my body and my heart hurt.

“A-Are you alright?”

“Y-Yeah, what about Arno?”

“No, he didn’t wake.”

“Then, it’s alright.”

She asked me just what I was trying to do, but I lied and said that I just slipped while trying to get up.

In the third box from father-in-law, there were fruits, nuts, berries, confectioneries and bottled goods.

“The fruits smell nice~”

The box was filled with a sweet scent.

Pears, red peaches, plums, walnuts, chestnuts. It was full of the tastes of autumn.

“There are many kinds of fruit in Sieg’s country.”

“Our country doesn’t have that much though.”

“I see.”

As for this land, the fruits that grow here are berries.

There are many fruits in the market, but they’re mostly imported. Moreover, they’re expensive.

I think that it would be nice to have an orchard here, but the trees will wilt from the cold.

Sieg said that the situation was similar in her country.

There are not that many kinds, but the fruits that can grow in snow are aromatic and sweet and sour, with apples being the prime example.

Sieg told me a story about fruits.

“In my homeland, there are three words for describing kinds of fruit.”

Sieg held up a bottle strawberry jam in her hand.

“We called berries like strawberries ‘Beeren.’”

The meaning is grainy fruit.

Berries also grow in Sieg’s country, but it seems like the variety is not the same as my country.

“The second are fruits with large stones inside, ‘Steinobst.’”

The meaning is stone fruit.

Apricots, plums, peaches and cherries are included in this variety.

“Finally, fruits with small seed at the core, ‘Kernobst’.”

The meaning is core fruit.

They usually refer to apples and pears.

It seems that the demand for ‘kenobst’ is high.

“My country is called ‘the country of apples’ by people of other countries.”

Sieg’s country produces a lot of apples, fruits which are loved from a long time ago.

“I recall a foreigner getting surprised from seeing me take an apple out of my bag.”

“That really is surprising.”

Carrying fruits in a bag, it’s the first time I heard of something like that. For getting full, quenching thirst, there are many uses for it.

That really is nice. I didn’t know that Sieg liked apples that much.

Since they sell apples occasionally at the market, I thought that it would be nice to buy some.

The fruits that were sent this time could be stored for long periods of time, and they were usually used for confectioneries.

There were lots of them, so I might be able to think up a menu that serves them.

Apple pie, apple cake, baked apple, apple scone.

Nn, it feels like they will all use a lot of butter and eggs.

Dairy is precious so I don't want to have to use it in the pub during the polar nights as much as possible. In addition, we can't procure eggs in the polar nights.

"It's a pub, so wouldn't it be alright to not have confectionery?"

"But still."

I would like female customers as well, not just men.

However, to make baked goods, I would need eggs and butter.

I can buy butter, but I can't make mass purchases of eggs, which spoil easily.

"I think caramelised apples would be the limit."

"They might go well with crackers or biscuits."

"Alright."

Crackers and biscuits have to be imported, but they can be stored for long periods of time.

I might introduce coffee or black tea for female customers.

"S-Somehow it's not really a pub anymore."

"It's not a café either."

We're not just serving food, so it's not a restaurant either.

I wonder, something like a pub, something.....? Or is it different.

"Well, it's okay. Not tied down by anything, the liberal 'Sieglinde'"

“The name is wrong.”

“Right! ‘The Crimson Eagle.’”

I want the establishment to have a warm interior and a bright mood.

The poster girl would of course be Sieglinde....., while I was having delusions, I suddenly realised something. I had not yet asked her to work as a waitress at the pub.

I promptly told her about it.

“Erm, Sieg.”

“What is it?”

“I have a request.”

When I bowed and asked if she could help with the pub, she said that she will help even if I hadn’t asked.

“I will help as much as possible.”

“I-I’m happy!”

If there’s someone so cute like Sieg, there might be men who come to see her.

When I told her that, Sieg had an awkward expression.

“I think that there’s a higher probability for cute girls to come in.....”

R-Right!

I remembered that Sieg was popular with the women.

Even before the store opened, I felt that there would be many female customers, so I burned up with a mysterious sense of duty that I have to fill the menu with many sweet foods.

Chapter 112 - The Herring Fair and the Secret Dessert

Today, we went to the herring fair being held at the port near the village.

Mother, Sieg, Arno, all of the family went.

I had Arno wrapped in a cloth hanging from my neck and held him under my arm.

A baby is warm and cute and the best!!

It's the first time I'm going to the herring fair. It's an event with a long history, being opened once a year.

They usually sell processed herrings there. Other than those, there are also delicious breads, vegetables, spices, among various goods.

Until now, I have been living alone, and it was enough to fish in the lakes and rivers. It seems that mother frequented this fair every year. Every time she came with father, he would get lost. What a troublesome person.

"Huh, then, did I go to the fair when I was young?"

"Grandpa said that you shouldn't go since Ritchan would be lost in the crowd."

"I see."

Mother's father, my grandfather is much stricter and more earnest than my paternal grandfather.

However, after hearing more stories about him now, I could tell that he wasn't all just draconian.

It would have been nice to know more about grandfather.

While we were talking, we arrived at the port.

Maybe because it's still early, there weren't many people. According to mother, it seems that this period is time is right. If there were many people, she was planning to wait with Arno, but it seems that it would be alright to go with Arno.

The main item of the fair is the pickled herrings that the fishermen are proud of. Depending on the store, there are many different kinds of seasonings.

Mother seemed to have a shop that likes to visit, so she proceeded without even glancing at the other stores.

It's been a decade since mother came here, but the store she had in mind was still there.

She looked happy to see the shopkeeper again after many years.

When I glanced at Sieg, she was making a strange expression as she was looking at the stores around her.

"Sieg, what's wrong?"

"Nothing, I just thought that the atmosphere of the city is different from usual."

"Since there are so many fishermen opening stores."

"I see."

It's not rare to see fishermen betting everything on the herring fair that opens once a year. Everyone brings out their prized pickled herring and competes, or so I heard.

Mother bought herrings from the first store she visited. The goods were packed and then placed into the bag I was carrying.

She bought three kinds of pickled herrings, one with carrots, one with herbs and one with pickled onions, in large quantities.

After we bought what we wanted, we strolled leisurely around other stores.

We also bought cheese, processed salmon, tomato sauce, canned fish, among many other preserved foods.

"Ritz, will you be alright with the luggage?"

"I'm fine."

The bag I have was bulging now. Sieg and mother also had luggage in their hands. We might have bought a little too much.

“This could be sold at the pub! Thinking that, I ended up buying a lot.”

Well, there’s only a few times a year when we can shop this much. It’s good sometimes for a change, I thought.

Our stomachs are empty, so let’s go eat! I wanted to say, but we decided to load the luggage onto the carriage first. Today, I splurged a bit and hired a carriage for the day.

Sieg decided to change Arno’s diaper and breastfeed him inside the carriage.

When I was about to get on as well, mother said, “Ritchan, you can’t~,” softly rejecting me. I was ordered to standby in front of the door.

To protect my family, I stood guard in front of the carriage door.

The carriage can be locked from the inside, though.....

After we finished shopping, it was time to eat.

Only during this period, a special restaurant opens, or so I heard from mother, so I was looking forward to it.

However, upon arriving at the restaurant, my eyes opened wide.

“Mother, this is?”

“A restaurant~”

Sieg looked a little surprised as well.

Mother led us to a large fishing boat.

The special store was an on board restaurant.

When we went inside the ship, there were many tables like a restaurant. Maybe because it was before lunchtime, there weren't many people yet.

The shop lady had lent us a cradle for Arno.

Possibly because we were on a ship, Arno went off to sleep though I rocked the cradle for a bit.

I placed my coat over him so that it won't be cold.

"Now then, what will we have?"

When the menu paper arrived, I told mother and Sieg that they can look first.

"Linde-chan, Ritchan, you can have whatever you want~"

The other day, mother received her share from her traditional handicrafts, so her purse was filled.

It seems that the bracelets and the hair decorations mother makes are popular among tourists. The shop lady was happy too.

Sieg and mother seemed to be done with deciding their dishes, and handed over the menu to me.

"Ahh, this is hard to choose....."

Befitting an on board restaurant, there were many different kinds of seafood. Since it was a special occasion, I wanted to have something that I usually could not have.

"Shrimps..... Shrimps, I guess."

To share, we ordered many different dishes.

A while later, the dishes were served.

First, an assortment of cheeses was served.

It was rare to see cheese with nuts or herbs in them.

There were aperitifs as well, but Sieg is breastfeeding so she can't have them.

Mother can't drink either, so I ended up having to drink it.

It was a free service from the store, so I couldn't waste it.

The drink was strong, like how fishermen like it, I drank it as tears formed in the corners of my eyes.

Now, the long-awaited food was served.

Mediterranean shrimps blanched with herbs, round slices of boiled eggs, salmon (lohi) grilled with herbs and butter, an assortment of vegetables, herring gratin, mackerel in tomato sauce, the staple salmon milk soup and sliced rye bread.

There were many fish dishes.

After praying, we started eating.

I picked up a shrimp and an egg slice with a fork and dipped them in tartar sauce. The shrimp was chewy and went well with the mild flavour of the sauce. The boiled egg was nice too.

The salmon grilled in herbs and butter was being served at the stalls too, and the delicious smell was unbearable. I could finally have it. The surface was crispy and some oil had risen so it was delicious. The taste of butter and herbs was just indescribable. The herring gratin is also called 'the alluring gratin'.

It's made with herrings pickled in salt and oil along with potatoes. It is said that these are tasty enough to tempt vegetarians.

The surface had crispy potatoes and there was cheese melted inside. The savoury flavour of the herring went well with the thick white sauce. It might go well with alcohol too.

Mother liked the mackerels in tomato sauce. The salmon milk soup was a stable favourite.

The herring salad tasted light so it was good. The spices were nice, and went well with bread.

Everything tasted nice.

With full bellies, we returned home.



After we returned home, we all went about our work.

I went to the outdoors kitchen behind the house.

What I was going to make was the snack I was going to bring out at the pub.

I am using the apples and the crackers I received from father-in-law.

For many days, I pondered how I should bring out the sweet flavour.

The problem of not being able to use eggs and butter in the middle of the polar nights will be solved with the crackers. I hadn't made any yet, so I'm not sure yet.

The seeds were removed from the apples and then candied.

The caramels made by boiling condensed milk, along with crackers, were heated in a pot until they became soft, after which they were placed at the bottom of a plate.

Apples, crackers, apples and crackers were placed on top, along with some bread crumbs, and baked in an oven.

The apple pie was finished.

I took some home, thinking of asking Sieg and mother how it is.

I prepared some tea and served the pie slices.

"How is it?"

The moment she put some pie in her mouth, mother's eyes glistened. The corners of Sieg's mouth had curled up slightly too.

Even without hearing it, I could tell it was delicious.

I decided to have some as well.

The surface was crispy, and the inside was moist. The sweet and sour flavour and the chewing texture of the apples were good too. The crackers soaked in caramel was a little too sweet.

Well, for making this for the first time, it was quite good.

"Maybe I should tone down the sweet flavour?"

"Don't worry. Women like sweet things."

"It might go well with coffee too."

"Aha!"

I noted down what the women said.

Unexpectedly, the apple pie received amazing reviews.

It seems like I could take care of the sweet snacks for the pub. I felt relieved.

Chapter 113 - Ahh, Wonderful Nuts

Today, I set about processing the nuts I bought from the merchant.

The nut in question is walnuts.

Walnuts are one of the delicacies of autumn. I heard that they're very nutritious and good for one's health from father.

Other than that, they make one's skin more beautiful as well as prevent aging effects. It is also good for insomnia and strengthening one's organs.

Freshly picked walnuts are cheap and easy to procure.

Because they have hard shells. That is a little bothersome though.

For walnuts, the insides are eaten.

Seeing the three boxes of walnuts, I reflected a bit that I got a little too excited.

Maybe because I had a troubled expression, Teoporon was going to help.

"Then, can you help me with getting the walnuts?"

I explained to Teoporon and started working.

I peeled the green fruit that definitely looked as though they are unripe.

The process is simple: just smashing the fruits with a hammer.

There is the method of placing the fruits in water or burying them to rot them, but they have to be left there for two weeks so using hammers are faster.

I brought two flat slabs of stone from nearby to start getting the nuts.

.

“Then, let’s begin!”

Brown juices came out of the walnut fruits. These dyed my fingers. They’re troublesome like berry juice, in that they do not come off easily. I have to be careful to not get them on my clothes.

We continued working in silence.

.....Even so, Teoporon is quite fast.

He got rid of the fruit and filled the basket with walnuts.

Thanks to the strong warrior, processing three boxes worth of nuts was done quickly. Afterwards, we were to rinse the walnuts.

On the surfaces of the shells, there are astringent bits so we have to remove them.

We got water from the well and washed the nuts.

Even here, Teoporon kept pumping water.

.....I’m envious of that stamina and those muscles.

If I tried to pump water at the rate Teoporon did it, I would definitely get muscle pains the day after that.

That was the sad reality.

After washing the walnuts, they were laid out to dry with a net placed over them to deter bugs and animals.

A fortnight after drying the walnuts. The walnuts finally became edible. If left in the shells, they can be stored for one or two years, serving as a precious source of nutrients.

Moisture is the greatest enemy to walnuts!

Thus, I stored them where there was plenty of ventilation.

“Amazing.”

“I wonder if I bought a little too much?”

Seeing the great amount of walnuts, Sieg exclaimed in surprise.

I am reflecting on it.

I decided to give a third to the Rango family.

“Now then, why don’t we try some!”

It can be eaten raw, but since it’s hard to remove the shell we eat it after roasting it once.

“How do you shell the walnuts?”

“There’s a nutcracker somewhere~”

I have a nice steel nutcracker, but objects can’t be found when searching for it.

I couldn’t help but crack them with my hands.

“The shell looks hard, can you really crack them?”

“If you know the trick.”

I picked up two walnuts and arranged them so the hard blunt bits will touch each other, then clenched hard with both hands.

Then, one shell would be cracked. If done well, both shells can be removed.

“Alright.”

I grabbed two walnuts and clenched them to crack them. With a clear sound, the shell split.

“Hehh, amazing.”

“I think anyone can do it though.”

I talked about cracking shells as though I knew a lot, but honestly I think I was lucky.

It’s been a while since I cracked walnuts with my hand. I was relieved that they were split cleanly.

The dextrous Sieg managed to learn the trick in just a few minutes.

“Be careful not to hurt your hands.”

“There’s no need to worry.”

The two of us cooperated and opened enough walnuts for both of us to eat.

I lightly fried the walnuts in a pan.

Once they were fried a bit, the brown husks came off as well.

First, we had them with a bit of salt.

The fried walnuts had an aromatic scent. The texture was crunchy.

I thought that the saltiness was just enough.

“It’s good.”

“Indeed.”

It would go well with alcohol indeed.

As she was abstaining for now, she stared off into the distance.

Next, I tried making caramel walnut jam.

The method is just adding fried walnuts and honey to condensed milk caramel and boiling them.

“We’ll have these with bread!”

I spread plenty of the completed caramel walnut jam on bread.

Then I took a bite.

The compatibility of the walnuts and the caramel was amazing.

It was just boiled condensed milk caramel, but it was very sweet and had a soft flavour.

I felt that it would go well with toasted bread.

Sieg also praised that women would like these.

“Then, should I make a toast meal set.....”

“I think adding them in the dough would be nice too.”

“Caramel walnut bread! Uwa, that will definitely be delicious!”

For that, I asked Rurupron to make some later.



The menu of the pub was slowly getting filled out.

The menus that were already decided are:

- Soup of potato dumplings with corned beef inside (limited to five servings a day)
- Fried corned beef and potatoes
- Fish and tomato sauce stew
- Fried oysters and mushrooms
- Daily soup

For the permanent menus, they will be simple dishes able to be made with canned foods.

For the potato dumplings that will take some time, they will be limited menus.

There will be rye bread and caramel walnut bread for the bread.

For the alcohol:

- Berry liqueur
- Red wine
- Potato liquor
- Beer

In addition, we decided to serve alcohol only for three hours every night. No one is to get dead drunk, absolutely not.

Non-alcoholic beverages:

- Berry juice
- Coffee
- Tea

There's not that much for some reason, but it can't be helped.

I am trying to make some other things. Though I'm not sure if it will succeed.

Finally, the desserts:

- Caramel apple pie

For the desserts, I am still in the process of researching them.

Indeed, making confection without eggs or milk is hard.

After the polar nights are over, I want to make the menu better.

I'm curious about the snacks using buckwheat that the shop lady mentioned.

Nighttime.

After everyone went off to sleep, I went to the kitchen.

To add another drink, I decided to try making a sample.

The ingredients are honey, brown sugar, white sugar, lemons, raisins and yeast.

First, water is boiled in a pot.

Sugar is added and the mixture is cooled for a bit, after which lemon juice is added.

It is then cooled more.

Once the mixture became lukewarm, I added yeast and left it for a day. Then, there will be a little bit of fizz.

That is added into a bottle with raisins and sugar, then cloth is put over the lid.

It will be finished after a week of leaving it in a cool storage.

Sparkling lemon juice, complete.

If it's a little sour, one can add honey.

If there's too much yeast, it will become alcohol, so I need to be careful.

I referred to mother's recipe for this.

It was a juice I was used to from a long time ago.

I tried it after a week, and it was rather good for the first attempt.

It was refreshing, so it might go well with snacks with strong flavour.



The building that I left to the carpenter was completed recently.

The blue walls and the white roofs were appraised as cute by a neighbour lady.

Since the shop lady said that many people asked what the building next door was, so I decided to make a sign.

—— Remote Land Pub 'The Crimson Eagle', opening before the polar nights!

For now, we will work every other day, opening from morning to night.

I can't even fathom how many people will come and how many people we would need.

I will have to learn as I manage the store.

We made a poster for advertisement as well.

I asked mother to draw the picture.

I was asked to write something, so I wrote about how 'The Crimson Eagle' will be a fun place serving good food.

Also, I remembered to write, 'The cutest and the most popular women will greet you!'

I put up the posters at the fort's dining hall and the village square bulletin board.

Just a little more until the opening of the store!

I continued to prepare while enjoying it greatly.

Chapter 114 - Interlude: Halloween of the Remote Land!

I was surprised upon seeing mother and Sieg's appearances when they came home after shopping.

They had great amounts of pumpkins in their hands.

"Just what are those for?"

"I'm thinking of doing a Halloween party~"

"Halloween?"

When I asked what that was, mother started speaking energetically.

It was a foreign festival that she experienced in the middle of a trip.

However, mother did not seem to be used to the festival (?) called Halloween.

To summarise the story.....

- Draw demon faces on pumpkins.
- Cosplay and threaten that you'll play tricks unless there are treats.
- Have a pumpkin cuisine party at night.

It sounded like her memory of it was fuzzy and vague.

There might have been something holy to the actual festival.

However, I think that it will be fun.

I thought that it would be good to make this a festival for the whole village.

Since, a festival involving treats is good for children.

The villagers would also be happy if children came to play.

It's just a week away, but I quickly drew up plans and went around the village asking for favours.



For now, I named it 'Halloween of the Remote Land'.

For the houses that are cooperating, I asked them to place pumpkins outside their doors.

The children will dress up and go to the houses with pumpkins to get treats.

After receiving the treats, they will help out at the house and then return.

I went around the village and asked for cooperation.

It was a festival involving children, so there were many houses that accepted.

I also asked Captain Artonen about it.

The kind captain said that he will have a pumpkin on the window and wait for the children.

The shop lady was very glad to celebrate Halloween again, saying that she missed it.

Then, I heard the whole story about Halloween from her.

Halloween is a festival where the autumn harvest is celebrated while chasing evil things away.

Depending on the region, the history and the interpretation can vary greatly.

Most of the time, people see it as a fun festival where people dress up and get treats.

There is some religiousness to it, but not many people mind it, the shop lady said.

"Well, I guess it's good if people enjoy it."

"Aha!"

Well, it started from mother's vague statement, but we would be able to enjoy Halloween unique to this village.

I bought many ingredients for making treats and returned home.

Halloween was tomorrow.

We were busy with various preparations, so I had not been making snacks.

Mother and Sieg were making some, but since it was rare opportunity I decided to make something as well.

Of course, I am making pumpkin snack!

I decided to make simple scones.

First, I cut open pumpkins and boiled them until they became soft, after which I mashed them.

Frankly, peeling the skin off would be better for the texture, but pumpkin peels are full of nutrition so I mashed them up together.

I added warm milk into the pumpkin mash and kneaded.

In a bowl, I mixed flour, baking powder, sugar, butter melted using a double boiler and the softened pumpkins.

Once the dough formed, I started kneading it over a plate that had flour sprinkled over it.

I kneaded it using a wooden stick, folding and rolling it many times.

I put the dough into thin cups that had flour applied to it to get round shapes. Then those are placed on oiled iron plates, with fried pumpkin seeds placed on top.

They were finished twenty later. The dough had risen properly.

I left them for a while to let the residual heat go away, and then I tasted them.

The crunchy and fluffy scone had the original sweet flavour of pumpkins.

The fried seeds were delicious too.

I asked Sieg and mother to have some as well, and they liked it.

Mother and Sieg were making cookies with chocolate and nuts.

I had only one, but they were very delicious.

After the three of us finished wrapping the snacks, we started preparing for tomorrow.

“Right! Ritchan, I made proper Halloween costumes for you too!”

“Eh?”

Don’t only children dress up? I was about to say, but mother ran out of the room cheerfully.

I only got bad vibes.

When she returned, she joyfully showed us the clothes.

“This is for Linde-chan!”

She prepared a witch’s black hooded coat for Sieg.

It was unexpectedly simple, so Sieg looked relieved as she received them.

“This is for Ritchan!”

“.....”

Mine weren’t clothes. There was a headband with triangular attachments that look like cat ears.

“M-Mum, these are?”

“Cat ears..... Sorry, I didn’t have time to make clothes for Ritchan.”

“..... No, it’s alright, but isn’t it fine if I don’t dress up?”

“But there is the theme of being a black cat couple.”

“Black cat couple?”

Sieg and I both got surprised.

There were cat ears on her coat hood.

“S-Sieg’s, cat ears!!”

“I think they’re cute~”

“Th-They’re, very cute, I think!!”

That’s my mother!!

What a genius, to have cat ears.

I love Halloween. It’s the best!!

“If I had time, I would have made tails too.”

“Oh, tails!!”

“For Ritchan.”

“No, I’m fine with tails.....”

I asked her to get a good night’s sleep tonight.

I stared at my son’s face as he slept in his cradle.

When Arno grows up, I would like him to put on many different monster costumes.



Halloween.

Immediately, I took a peek at the cat witch Sieg.

Sitting in front of the dressing table, she had the coat on, but she didn’t have the hood on.

I sneaked up behind her and put it on.

“Oh, it’s a beautiful cat!”

“.....”

She sent me a sharp glare through the mirror.

But it looks good on her, so isn't it alright?

“Ritz, what about your cat ears?”

“Huh, is it bad if I don't have them on?”

“It's better to have them on.”

Who'd be pleased with an old guy with cat ears.....

However, I felt sorry to only have her dress up, so I also put on the cat ears.

“Come to think of it, there was a Halloween phrase, right!?”

“Trick or treat?”

That that!!

I wanted to hear it from Sieg, so I'm happy to hear it from her!!

“Hey, Sieg, say it again.”

“.....Trick or treat.”

“I see~~ How troubling, I don't have any treats~~”

I spread open my hands for her to play tricks on me.

Sieg looked exasperated.

“.....It's the first time seeing someone welcoming tricks like that.”

“Really?”

If possible, something other than hitting me, I asked.

With an expression that seemed to say that she can’t help it., Sieg approached.

She put her arms around my shoulders and kissed me on the cheek.

Tricks are the best!!



At our house too, many lovely monsters visited.

They threatened us for treats, but when we gave them treats they became nice and helped out.

They helped pack dried mushrooms, helped out with the gardening, played with the dogs, doing various things.

I left the sharing of treats to Sieg and mother, while I went to the village to check on things.

Surprisingly, there were many houses that helped out.

Captain Artonen of the fort also said that it was a healing experience because many children visited.

Finally, I went to Teoporon’s house.

He also had a pumpkin in front of his house.

I had explained Halloween to him just with gestures, but I’m happy that it got through properly.

When I knocked on the door, Teoporon greeted me.

He had a basket of treats in his hand.

“Ah, Teoporon, I’m not a kid, sorry.”

However, Teoporon silently stared down at me.

Could it be that he will give treats if I say that?

“T-Trick or treat~?”

Teoporon made a nihilistic smile and gave me a treat from the basket.

“Th-Thank you~~.....”

After that, I helped out with cleaning up the wood bits that were lying around after Miruporon chopped firewood.

The children at the square said that it was fun going to Teoporon’s place.

I wonder just what happened.

They said that it was a secret.

Later, when I was coming back home after shopping, I heard the joyful yells of children. When I took a peek, I saw Teoporon lifting up a child. The children around him were happily insisting that they were next.

The Halloween mystery of Teoporon was solved.

It was a sudden event, but it received positive reviews from the villagers.

I thought that it would be nice to do it again next year.

Chapter 115 - Foreign Feast

After seeing the menu of the Remote Land Pub 'The Crimson Eagle', mother commented, "The menus look like things old people would like."

Well, a thirty-year-old old man did think of it, so it can't be helped. I can't think up what young men and women would like.

Furthermore, there weren't many ingredients so it was hard.

"Then, how about pasta?"

"Pasta?"

"Yes!"

"Could it be, something you had overseas?"

"Correct~"

Pasta seems to be a food made in various shapes by making dough with flour, eggs and water. Then these are boiled and had with various sauces. I couldn't imagine it at all.

"Shall we make it?"

"What? Have you been working at a restaurant?"

"A lady at an inn taught me."

"Hehh~"

What's more, they managed to get close even though they didn't know each others' languages. During their stay, father followed an unfortunate schedule of working at night and sleeping during the day, so he didn't translate for them. He really is an absurdly useless being.

"Ah, but, don't we need eggs for pasta?"

Eggs got in the way again.

Because we can't use eggs, the menu overall became catering to old people's tastes.

However, mother said that it was alright.

"There's pasta that doesn't use eggs."

"I see."

Promptly, mother headed to the kitchen to make pasta.

Moreover, after mother returned, Ruruporon allowed us to use the kitchen.

I wonder if she was cheering us on in her own way.

Her encouragement was warm, and I felt happy.

In addition, today the Rango family are off-duty.

"Then, let us promptly start making them!"

"I look forward to it!"

When mother teaches things, for some reason, she uses polite speech. The reason is unknown.

"There are only three ingredients."

The ingredients for pasta are flour, salt and olive oil. That is all.

"Now, we shall start making ear pasta~"

'Orecchiette' means small ear.

“First, weigh the flour!”

To be able to make some myself later, I noted down the recipe on a piece of paper.

Half of the flour is flour used for bread, while the other half are coarsely ground wheat called semolina.

Semolina usually used as substitute for bread crumbs when deep frying, or for making snacks such as cookies and cakes.

In a bowl, the flour, lukewarm water, olive oil and salt were mixed together using her hands.

It seemed to take quite a bit of energy, since mother had beads of sweat forming on her forehead. Though, even when I asked if I should take her place, she refused.

Once the dough formed, a cloth was put over the bowl to make sure the dough doesn't become dry and then it was left in the cold storage for a few hours.

Two hours later.

The thinly spread dough is cut into stick shapes, and then those are sliced further. When the front part is pulled with pressing the dough with a knife, the dough flips. It seems that maintaining this shape is the point.

The completely pasta is dried for a while.

“For the sauce, broccolis boiled until they turn stick are nice.”

“They don't sell that around here.”

“Sorry~”

Since it couldn't be helped, I made sauce with things I had at home.

It seems that tomato sauce is commonly had with pasta.

“Then, let us make tomato bacon pasta.”

“Alright.”

There are many cans of tomato and bacon. I think that this dish can be added to the store’s menu.

While mother was preparing to boil the pasta, I made the tomato sauce.

The ingredients were preserved tomatoes made in summer, water, bacon and vegetables.

First, sliced and dried garlic is fried in a pan with olive oil. Then, the garlic is removed, and chopped onions are fried until they turn light brown.

The fried onions are moved to a separate dish, and afterwards bacon is fried. Once it was cooked slightly, onions, tomato, water and spices are added then heated to make tomato sauce.

At the same time, the pasta seemed to be ready.

Today, we invited the Rango family for luncheon.

On the table, there was a strange dish other than pasta.

When I asked what it was, mother replied that they were dishes she learned when she was staying at a place of people who looked similar to the Rangos.

“When I left, I got a lot of rare spices.”

“Hehh, I see.”

There was bread made using corn, with finely chopped vegetable and meat on top of it, along with some red sauce made with the spices.

“Is this tomato sauce too?”

“Something like that~”

“?”

Mother gave be a very brief explanation.

There were quite exotic dishes. It became a fine feast.

When we were about finished with the preparations, the Rangos came.

They presented us with a large chunk of smoked bear meat as a gift. It was before the polar nights, so I was very happy.

I greeted them by pounding my chest with my fist.

When I led them inside to the dining room, they happily looked at Arno who was sleeping in his cradle.

Everyone likes children.

When Sieg greeted the three of them, they, except for Ruruporon, returned to the usual sharp expressions.

Mother asked them to take seats.

Before we started eating, the three of them whispered something with their hands on their chests. It might prayers before a meal. We also prayed to the Spirit.

When that was over, mother introduces the dishes.

“This is taco! I wonder if Rango-san also had it~?”

When offered the food, Teoporon pounded his chest and took a bit of the food that mother called taco.

Then, he opened his eyes wide and looked at Ruruporon who was sitting next to him. Seeing him like that, Ruruporon also took a bite.

The moment Ruruporon had some taco, tears started rolling down her cheeks.

“Eh, Ruru-san, what’s wrong!? My, what should I do.”

Was it too spicy, I heard mother murmur, so I also tried some.

“Uwa, spicy!”

The description mother gave was indeed very rough.

On top of the taco, there were lots of spicy foreign spice, called chili, used for it.

I also had tears rolling down my cheeks like Ruruporon.

“Oh no, Ritchan, not you too!”

Sieg gave me some water. How kind.....

It was spicy, but I felt that I would get used to it. My body warmed up too.

Before I realised it, Miruporon was eating it without changing her expression. Ruruporon also calmed down and started eating with a smile.

It seems like they like the dish mother made.

“Could it be that they missed it?”

“Ah, that might be it.”

Here we can't get the spice called chili. They might have been happy to taste flavours from their home after a long time.

“Ah, right!”

We were in the middle of eating, but mother went out.

A few minutes later, she came back with something in her hands.

“Ruru-san, these are chilies and chili seeds I received when I was travelling.”

Since we don't make a lot of dishes using chili, she decided to give them to the Rangoes. Ruruporon received them with a surprised expression. She was crying again. Instead, Teoporon pounded his chest and bowed down.

“I'm glad that you liked it.”

I don't know what the environment for raising chili is, but I thought that it would be nice for the harvest to be successful.

It might be a good idea to ask a merchant if it's possible to order chilies here.

After that, we started eating bacon tomato pasta.

“Ah, delicious!”

The pasta was springy. The pasta was dimpled so the sauce mixed well. It was rather satisfying dish.

It was simple to make as well, so I thought that it was perfect for the store.

The people of the Rango family enjoyed pasta as well. I felt happy for some reason.

“Teoporon, Ruruporon and Miruporon, thank you all the time!”

Once again, I thanked the Rangoes.

I had been spending over a decade with them, but I never did something like this.

I could say that I did not have that much leisure. Although that's rather embarrassing.

Thanks to mother and Sieg, I finally had some leftover time.

I was spending a very enjoyable time.

If it's possible, I would like to have a meal together with them like today.

Chapter 116 - Bewitching New Menu!

After returning from hunting, I can take up the glorious job of singing lullabies to Arno.

Seeming like he had been having a nap, my son's eyes were shining brightly.

I laid him down in the cradle and rocked it, to which he partly closed his eyes joyously.

While doing rhythmical movements, I became sleepy.

This won't do. I slapped myself to wake myself up.

While rocking Arno's cradle, I thought of the pub that was near the opening date.

The building was complete, while mother and Sieg were taking care of the interior.

The inside has warm colours used. Fitting for 'The Crimson Eagle'.

I ordered alcohol as well and stored them in the cellar, as well as diligently making menu tables by carving wood.

There were plenty of ingredients as well.

Then, what's left is.....

—— Ritchan's menus look like things old people would like~~

What mother said a few days ago was stuck in my head.

They're my proud dishes, what part of it feels like an old man.....

I pondered while rocking Arno's cradle.

- Soup of potato dumplings with corned beef inside (limited to five servings a day)
- Fried corned beef and potatoes
- Fish and tomato sauce stew

- Fried oysters and mushrooms
- Daily soup

Overall strong taste? Going well with alcohol? Overall brown shade?

N~n. No idea.

“Arno, Arno, what do you want~?”

Arno would of course like his mother’s milk. He can’t have solid food yet.

“.....Milk, it’s good.”

After murmuring that, I realised what I had just said. I felt glad that there was no one else around.

Well, milk is precious! That’s what!

.....Nn.

This won’t do. I can only think of needless things.

I couldn’t think up any good plan, so I decided to make myself feel better while patrolling around the village, which is the same as taking a stroll.

I took out the cloth for going on strolls, lifted Arno up and put on coats so that he won’t be cold. I then wrapped the cloth around him, knelt down and embraced him gently. After that, I tied the cloth around my neck and under my armpit.

I said a word to mother who was cooking with Ruruporon in the kitchen and then went out for a stroll.

Until recently, the village and the forests' trees had autumn foliage, but on the ground there was a thin layer of snow, that it had completely turned into a wintry scenery.

Children were running about energetically, while ladies were working diligently. Since it was before the polar nights, there were many men hauling prey from the forests.

When I have Arno, everyone regardless of gender or age comes to see him. They praise that he's cute, so my cheeks loosen up into a grin.

Meanwhile, I saw the figure of a familiar boy, so I spoke to him from behind.

"Luca~!"

He flinched and turned around with a prickly expression.

"Don't suddenly call me, I'll get surprised!"

"So~rry."

Luca seems to be returning home after shopping, since he had a lot in his hands.

"I spoke to you at a tough time. Aren't those heavy?"

"This much, it's not heavy at all."

"How amazing."

While talking with Luca, I ended up thinking about Aina. Since they're both stubborn.

I wonder if Aina's feeling alright? Ah, Emmerich too.

I have been contacting the two of them through letters. Aina and Emmerich seems like they're spending fun days. They look to be doing well, so it's a relief.

Her grandfather's attitude has been softening up recently. A little more, and the situation might become better. When that happens, I'm thinking of inviting them over to the village.

I asked how Luca was doing recently.

"What do you mean how?"

"No, I mean about Miruporon."

"N-Nothing happened!"

Adolescent boys don't usually get honest about women.

When people grow old, curiosity grows. I reflected that I should be more cautious.

Even so, there was a sack full of potatoes, four heads of cabbages, and three leather bags filled with bottles.

It's probably an errand for his mother, but it's rather cold of her.

"Ah, sorry for holding you up when it's heavy."

"No, I'm not that busy and it's not heavy anyway."

"Luca is kind."

"I'm normal."

"Right."

Luca was glancing at Arno, so I showed my son to him.

"Isn't my child super cute?"

"He looks like your wife."

He told me that he will grow into a handsome man.

Of course, I think that Arno will be popular with women like Sieg is, in the future.

“Come to think of it, I heard the rumour that you’re opening a store.”

“Ah, yes!”

I jumped at the opportunity and started advertising ‘The Crimson Eagle’.

Though it’s a pub, it doesn’t serve alcohol from noon to evening. There’s juice and snacks as well, so I told him that he can come any time.

“What will you serve?”

“Ah, er~m.”

When I told him the menu, he eyed me suspiciously since ingredients like corned beef was unknown.

Then, I had a good idea.

I should ask young people what they want to eat.

“Hey, Luca, is there anything you want to have?”

“.....Meat.”

How simple. Meat.

Meat, eh. The middle of the polar nights becomes centred on preserved foods so it’s rather hard.

Since we can’t go out hunting, we can only really use smoked meat for cooking.

Well, we can preserve meat if we keep it cold with ice.

When I asked specifically what he wanted, I received a reply that he wanted meatballs.

I felt that it would be conscientious to tell that there are no skewers or stews.

“If it’s meatballs, it’s easy to increase the volume.”

“Volume?”

“Bread crumbs or other fillers can be added to increase the amount.”

“So not all of it is meat?”

“Yes.”

“I didn’t know that.....”

He looked a little shocked.

Maybe I shouldn’t have told him that?

However, if there are fillers, it can’t form into balls.

When I told him that, he accepted it.

“Come visit after the store opens!”

“.....Well, if I feel like it.”

Come with Mirupron, I managed to endure and swallow those words right before they escaped my throat.

I thought in secret that it would be nice if they’re relationship deepened.

On my stroll, I visited the gift store to buy meat for making meatballs.

When I asked what type of meat is best for meatballs, she recommended pork to me.

I was surprised after hearing the price. It was unexpectedly cheap.

In a village where meat can be hunted, the demand for meat from livestock is low. Thus, merchants don't sell too much. Even if they do, the price would be rather high.

In the gift store, she sold meat for people who could not go out hunting because injuries or illnesses.

Today was apparently a special sale day for pork.

"Recently, making ham is popular among the ladies so I have been buying a lot of pork."

"Hoh!"

Homemade ham!

Sieg had talked about ham she had back home, so it created a small boom.

When the shop lady who knows about the recipe sold the pork with the recipe, they were sold out quickly.

Pork ham. I felt like eating them after a long time. I learned how to make it from father-in-law so I decided to buy plenty to make some as well.

The shop lady said that Arno was cute so I received a large bonus.



After returning home, I decided to make meatballs.

Upon hearing that, mother made a suggestion.

"Then, let's make meatball pasta."

"Meatball pasta, hehh, sounds interesting."

It seems that people in the city have it quite often. I think that it will be delicious.

First, the pork is minced well.

To make the texture better, coarsely ground meat and finely ground meat are mixed together.

In the bowl containing ground meat, spices and bread crumbs are added. I wanted to add eggs too, but they can't be procured during the polar nights, so instead I added in drained potatoes.

Until the ingredients become sticky, I shaped them into shapes, and then fried them in oil.

The finished meatballs are then boiled together with the tomato sauce mother made.

When that is spread over the cooked pasta along with dried basil, meatball pasta is complete.

The pasta and meatballs scattered about had an appealing look, I thought. It was perfect for children.

I called over Sieg as well for dinner.

First is the main, meatball pasta.

I took a meatball to my mouth using a fork.

When I chewed, the meaty juices flowed out. Since the meat is combination of coarse bits and fine bits, the texture is nice too. The spices were good too, and the tomato sauce mixed well. It was delicious.

"Ritchan, having powdered cheese on top is delicious too, you know?"

My!

As mother suggested, I sprinkled cheese over the pasta.

“Oh, delicious!”

The sour flavour of the tomato is lessened, and the flavour becomes deep.
Just by adding cheese, the change is amazing.

I think that young people would gladly have meatball pasta.

The recipe is simple too, so I decided to add it to the store menu.

Chapter 117 - The Soldiers' Window Logs

Jouluk¹ 02 Aake

The fort is peaceful again today.

We have shifts at the window, but only merchants come from outside. When the snow piles up, only one merchant might pass every two or three days. Though there are quite a few since the time before the polar nights is a season where goods are in great demand.

In contrast, the villagers, who live off the forest, pass frequently.

However, during the winter, only older people going out to hunt pass.

The village men, especially old grandfathers, act cold towards us.

Captain Artonen said that it couldn't be helped.

Of course, we had been fooling around too much.

Once, we were being paid with our meal payments put aside.

That was because we were pouring all our money into alcohol as if it was the most natural thing. Such a system was implemented starting from the captain before the captain before the previous captain.

Back then, we borrowed endlessly since they couldn't even pay for their own meals.

Really, I think that we were in a terrible state.

Working hour, what's that? We slept whenever we wanted and woke up whenever we wanted.

The fort reeked of alcohol, and we even picked fights with the villagers. It's natural that we would have been hated.

However, we changed thanks to the lord and his lady.

There were many events, and now we have been rehabilitated.

1 'Dec' in Finnish.

We can keep working diligently as soldiers because the lord's wife, who has a frightening face, comes to inspect us frequently. I'm just joking. Many good things happened.

First, sometimes, the girls of the village bring us refreshments. They're all cute, so the tension rises.

We all now lead well-regulated lives, so our body and health improved as well.

Also, when we are shovelling snow in the village, the villagers say, "Much appreciated," or "Thank you." It's unexpectedly gladdening.

That's why.

It's a boring place without anything to do, but it's better than before.

I'll do my best again tomorrow.

Today's number of people: 52 in total, with 3 merchants and 1 old martial race man.

Today's work, over!

Jouluk 07 Hanno

The lord who visited the window requested us to post some paper at the entrance.

On that, there was an advertisement for the new shop.

Remote Land Pub 'The Crimson Eagle'.

It seems like it's opening a few days later.

A place to enjoy meals and a little bit of drinks.

Surprisingly, the lord will be running it.

On the paper, it was written that a cute server will be there.

Is he hiring the village girls? When I asked further, he replied that the cutest girl in the world will be there.

The cutest girl in the world. Very intriguing.

Might it be Irola family's Erica-san, or might it be Kalliomäki family's Hiliya-chan?

It might even be the person rumoured to be on good terms with the lord, the most beautiful girl in the village, Bergholm family's Aina-san! Or so I thought, but I remembered that a foreigner took her away just a few months ago.

When we found that out, my colleagues and I felt down.

On that day, we wished that we were allowed alcohol just for the day.

The man who got the treasure of the village was apparently a tall, blond soldier with drooping eyes.

—— We're soldiers too, but why are we getting ignored.....

The one who does not get swayed by anyone, 'the salty Aina-sama', we were all saying, but in the she picked a handsome man.

We felt sad at our ugly appearances.

I ended up remembering that. We were rather depressed.

Eating while looking at a cute girl. Isn't it good, I thought.

Our scars might be cured too.

I quickly decided to invite my colleagues.

Today's number of people: 67 in total, with 2 merchants and 1 old martial race man.

Today's work, over~.

Jouluk 12 Jere

When we were in excited states, looking forward to the pub. We ended up receiving words of warning from Captain Artonen.

If we go in large scale right away, it will burden them. Thus, we decided that there will only have two people a day, for not more than two hours, as well as not drinking too much.

Since only a few people can go, we made a schedule.

I decided to bear it for the first time.

During our breaks, the atmosphere was lively from our discussions about the cute girl at 'The Crimson Eagle'.

Then, the conversation moved on to the topic of who the most beautiful girl in the village is, but we couldn't settle on.

Everyone had different tastes that names of many women came up.

Indeed, great girls like Aina Salonen Bergholm are hard to come across.

Someone mentioned that the daughter of the martial race family is quite beautiful, but the moment that topic was brought up, the father of that family appeared from the window so we were surprised to death.

When I wondered what it was, he apparently brought fish from the river as a snack.

—— Is he a bear of the forest or something?

The father of the martial race family went away soon.

That window, it's not an entrance. He did that sometimes, but no one could point that out.

From around summer, he had been bringing us berries, beehives or fruit by his whims.

We can't communicate with him, so his intentions are unknown.

The fish was jumping about on the table. The heartbeat did not calm down for some time.

By the way, the wife there is beautiful and has a great style, but the old man is too frightening.

We unanimously agreed that she should stop talking about the martial race family's women.

Well, before that, a boy from the village is screening others away to not let them approach her.

In the end, we decided that we should focus on the pub girl.

Today's number of people: 92 in total, with 3 merchants and 1 old martial race man.

Today's work, over!

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Jouluk 19 Kai

Today was finally the day for the opening of the Remote Land Pub.

I had work today, so I was to go tomorrow.

I am looking forward to it a lot.

We agreed that we should not talk about things in the store until everyone has had a chance to go.

That way, everyone can enjoy it in a fresh mood.

However, I was curious personally, so I intercepted my colleagues who had returned and asked them about it.

The two of them, Lassi and Mikko, returned with refreshed expressions.

Apparently, the food was all great, and the drinks were nice.

When I asked about the important cute girl, they said something strange.

—— Cute girl? We can say that it exists, and we can say that it doesn't exist.

I'm not sure what they mean.

Today's number of people: 100 in total, with 2 merchants and 1 old martial race man.

Today's work, over!



The next day.

The long-awaited holiday came.

We can only drink for a few hours at night. It's during the polar nights, so the time's around evening.

Surprisingly, even though it was a pub, it closed after 8 in the evening.

A colleague and I headed to the store as our hearts pounded.

Around the store, there were many villagers. It seems like they're watching. When we peeked inside from the window, there were vacant spots. Without reservation, we entered.

When we opened the door, a bell rang.

Inside the store, there was a large fireplace to warm the body.

The interior had a warm tone and the atmosphere was warm.

The kitchen was attached to the kitchen, that we could watch them cook.

As we looked around, a calm woman's voice said, "Welcome."

The moment I heard, I stood up straight out of reflex.

I slowly turned toward the origin of the sound.

There was the lord's wife, who had bright red hair and a sharp gaze.

"Please take a seat," she said. "Yeth," I replied.

She passed me the menu, but I was afraid of calling her over again, so I asked for the recommended dish and some water.

My colleague asked for the same.

Since the place is being run by the lord, it's not weird if his wife is here.

Even so, she's a bit curt. It would be nice if she smiled more. However, we would only panic if she did smile at us, so I immediately judged that it was unnecessary.

Anyway, where is the rumoured cute girl...?

No matter how much I look, there were no young women other than customers.

Suddenly, my colleague gasps.

When I asked what was wrong, he told me to look at the kitchen.

At the kitchen, there was a figure of someone working diligently.

—— Ah, there! A cute girl!

Her hair was tidied with a headband, and she was wearing a cloth folded in a triangular shape on her head.

She was working hard, and those eyes pointing down are very elegant.

I tilted my head in wonder if there was such a cute girl in the village.

However, I soon realised that the person was the lord.

—— Th-This heartthrob thief!!

I could only see a part of his upper body, so I ended up getting completely fooled.

In the meantime, food was served.

While saying the name of the menu energetically, the lord served the dishes.

The food was something I was seeing something for the first time. Underneath meatballs and tomato sauce, there was something else.

It was apparently a food called pasta.

The name of the dish is 'meatball tomato sauce pasta', we were told.

With a fork, I had some of the meatball and the pasta.

—— D-Delicious!!

The meatballs flowing with flavour from the spices and the chewy pasta was mixed with the sour sauce, that it was very tasty.

My colleague and I ended up wolfing everything down in silence.

Afterwards, we decided to go back after having a few drinks.

As we were leaving, the lord came up and thanked us for coming.

Just in case, I asked about the cute girl in the advertisement.

Then, he glanced at his wife who was washing dishes in the kitchen and said, "Sieg," in a flustered expression.

"What part of her is cute!" I almost shouted.

Well, to him, as a husband, his wife is the cutest in the world. Though I can't understand that.

When I told him that we will come again, he said that he was happy and flashed us a smile.

Once again, I imagined how it would have been if the lord was a woman.

Kind and diligent, good at cooking and cute.

He might have been the most popular woman in the village.

Then, I finally realised what Lassi and Mikko meant by, “Cute girl? We can say that it exists, and we can say that it doesn’t exist.”

—— So the cute girl is the lord in the end!!

However, the food was really delicious and filling, so I couldn’t care less.

We exited the store as the lord saw us off.

From the dark sky, snow was falling heavily.

We walked back to the fort by relying on the light from our lanterns.

When we returned to the fort’s window, the person on duty today asked how it was.

It seems that everyone wants to hear out of curiosity.

He hurried us for our impressions, so my colleague and I looked at each other and said that the food was best, while the cute girl was a cute girl.

I’m looking forward to his reaction tomorrow.

I decided that I’ll go to the store again when it’s quiet again for some meatball tomato sauce pasta.

Chapter 118 - Remote Land Pub, Opening!

Around the time the polar nights approached, the remote land pub 'The Crimson Eagle' opened.

For the first day, we decided to open from morning.

Our first customer was the couple from the shop.

As a gift, they gave us salt from overseas. I got teary-eyed from happiness.

Promptly, Sieg came to take their orders.

"What would you like?"

"What do you recommend?"

"Meatball Tomato Sauce Pasta."

Sieg sincerely explained the menu.

The pictures mother drew also helped people imagine the menus.

The store couple ordered the recommended dish with today's soup and tea.

Filled with energy, I started cooking. Sieg also prepared brewing tea.

Today's soup is a clear soup of beans and root vegetables.

It's made using dried ones, but the vegetables bring out a tasty stock. Mother made it last night.

First, I served the soup as appetizer.

"Ah, it's warm."

"The warmth really seeps into the body."

The seats were close to the kitchen so I could hear their reactions.

I felt somewhat nervous.

Later, I asked Sieg to serve the meatball tomato pasta.

“This is delicious!”

“It’s the first time I’m having pasta, but it’s nice.”

Sieg listened to the couple’s reactions and politely thanked them.

The dish we thought up sincerely was well-received by the couple.

After the meal, we brought condensed milk ice cream as dessert.

To celebrate the opening, I am planning to serve it to all the customers.

It’s a simple ice cream made by cooling a can of condense milk. If it’s just this, it’s too sweet so I am putting a sour berry sauce over it.

Since it’s just frozen condensed milk, it’s important to melt it slightly before serving it to make the texture better.

“Is this something your lordship thought up?”

“Yes. It’s just condensed milk though.”

“I like the sour flavour of the berries and the sweetness.”

“I’m relieved.”

Only my family and Captain Artonen tried it, so I’m happy that they’re complimenting it.

After the store couple left, customers did not come.

Well, it’s the first day, so that must be why.

The villagers were peeking inside at the windows, but when I open the doors to talk to them they all run away.

“How unfortunate! I failed to capture them, Sieglinde.”

“The villagers are all shy after all.”

“I see!”

Even if customers do not come, we serve dishes using preserved food so there won't be food left over.

The soup will be used for dinner too.

A while later, women who finished with their household chores came.

They asked for coffee and caramel apple pie, as well as pasta for lunch.

They planned well, preparing packed lunches for their families.

They all chatted happily with Sieg.

It really was a peaceful scene.

They also said that the dessert, condensed milk ice cream with berry sauce, was delicious. Phew, what a relief.

However, from the afternoon, the store was quiet again.

I had a lot of time, so I observed our customers' reactions and discussed what we should make.

“I think it would be nice to have more sweet things.”

“Though that will be rather tough during the polar nights.”

“Right~”

It's not as though I can't make cake or cookies without eggs, butter or milk, but I think it won't be as good.

“It feels like something like the iron plate crackers will be made.”

“Getting teeth chipped is a bit.....”

I already reached the limits.

For the snacks, I decided to ask mother's opinion after I return home.

During the winter, the sun sets in the afternoon.

I lit a candle on the table located outside. So that it won't go out from the wind, I put a cylindrical glass cover over it.

It had a rather fantastical scene.

The villagers went shopping to the gift shop with lanterns.

It seems that the shop lady advertised a bit, since people started coming in trickles here.

At dinner time, two soldiers from the fort came.

I was expecting many soldiers to come, but my guess missed.

Apparently, Captain Artonen arranged it so that they won't be a nuisance on the first day of opening.

Indeed, I thought.

Well, it would have been fine for them to come though.

The soldiers, unexpectedly, ate pasta quietly, had a few drinks and returned.

After they departed, there suddenly were a lot more customers.

It's definitely that the energised soldiers returned to the fort while chatting about the store. It really is thankful.

From the dinner time to nighttime, I spent a busy time.

At the final bell, we closed.

I had been handling the pot all night from the evening, so my arms were screaming in pain.

The meatballs sold out in the middle. The soup pot is also empty now.

“Ritz, you did well.”

“Sieg, thank you too.”

“No, I wasn’t here all day.”

Sieg returned home many times to breastfeed our son. Just that would have been tough though.

As for the sales, well, we’re slightly in the red, but our objective is not getting profit but providing entertainment for the whole village.

However, it will get tough if we continue like this, so I am thinking of making high-profit dishes after the polar nights are over.

For now, I prioritised getting past the polar nights in a brighter mood.

It’s rather hard, but seeing everyone’s smiles made me want to try my best.

“Once we get used to it, I’m thinking of hiring more people and maybe leave the store to someone else.”

“Right. That might be good.”

Even if mother is here, we have no reason to stay too long at the store.

We need someone’s help.

Won’t there be a cook somewhere? Also, someone moderately likable.

Even after closing, there was a mountain of work.

Beginning with cleaning, we had to prepare ingredients for tomorrow, organise the shelves, and keep the books.

When we finished, the day had already changed.

Having returned home after we prepared the ingredients, Sieg was waiting for me without going to sleep before me.

Moreover, she even prepared a bath for me.

I had dinner mother made by the warmth of the fireplace, took a bath and went under the covers.

As I had Sieg who had warm temperature in arms, I fell to sleep before I realised it.

Like so, the first day of work ended.



The next day.

Since it was hard for Sieg to go back and forth, we decided to take Arno as well.

Today, mother said that she'll help as well.

Maybe because the rumours were spreading, there was a line even before we opened.

"Hey, Ritchan, since it's cold outside, why don't you let customers in?"

"Nn, please."

I'm not prepared to serve dishes yet, but we can serve warm tea or soup.

Mother opened the doors and invited the customers in.

Arno was sleeping in a cradle by the window.

There were many occasions where people came in after seeing there was a child.

After lunch, the soup ran out so I hurried requested Ruruporon for some.

With the men, the combination of the dishes using canned food and alcohol was popular.

The elderly did not come very often.

However, grandpas and grandmas seemed to be interested in the store, since they were peeking in many times.

When I talked to them out of the thought that they should come in, they leave saying that they don't have any business with me.

I repeated that a few times, and one day something different from usual happened.

The elderly who always look at my son came again today.

They were smiling while looking into the cradle.

Then, Arno suddenly started crying.

Sieg was making meatballs, and mother had a tray holding cups of coffee.

I thought that I had to go, so I hurried out of the kitchen.

However, they were already at where my son was.

"My my, what could it be."

"Is he hungry?"

"It's alright, don't cry."

The grandmas outside embraced Arno and soothed him.

“Ah, thank you, thank you.”

When I thanked them, they were not honest and said that it was for the child.

Since it's an opportunity, how about some tea and snacks? When I offered that, they reluctantly took their seats.

Afterwards, elderly people came to the store as well.

Even on days when Arno isn't here, they come saying that it can't be helped.

I was so happy at that change.

Today, I invited Miruporon.

She was sipping coffee expressionlessly.

Outside the window, I saw Luca, so I tried to force him into the store.

“W-What're you doing! Does this store aggressively tout!?”

“Sorry, sorry.”

Since there's Miruporon, how about having some tea together? I asked.

Then, Luca's face turned deep red.

“Miruporon, she looks lonely, doesn't she? Please!”

“.....W-Well, if you put it like that.”

“Thank you, Luca!”

Noticing Luca, Miruporon made a nice smile.

Seeing that face, he looked captivated.

What a lovely couple, I thought as I watched from the kitchen.

“Ritz, peeping’s not good.”

“.....Yes.”

I was interested about those two, but I decided to diligently make caramel apple pie for two people.



The period where it’s dark all day, the polar nights.

It used to be a cold and boring period, but from the store a warm light and joyful laughter flowed out.

Seeing that, I felt that I did well to take up the challenge although it was quite tiring.

That was the story of the first winter where all the villagers spent the long and painful polar nights together.

Chapter 119 - Good Bathing Day!

When I was alone, the only joy I had was dining and bathing.

Especially regarding bathing, I once had been very picky.

Shampoo, bathwater additive, body shampoo, etc..

Among those, I had been especially absorbed with making soap.

I learned how to make soap from the village ladies and made soap using various materials.

I participated in exchanging soaps with the village ladies, but I had been busy for the past two years so I couldn't go.

This year, I was rearing to participate at the soap exchange in early spring, So I started making some with plenty of motivation.

Sieg also said that she will help.

"To think that we would even make soap."

"I hadn't been making them recently. For about two years?"

During the first polar nights with Sieg, there were many other things so I did not have time to make soap.

This would be a challenge after a long time.

This time, I decided to use somewhat high-quality oils that are considered to be good for the skin.

The first oil is 'olive oil'.

The best olive oil is considered to be 'extra virgin oil', squeezed out the best, but it seems that 'pure olive oil', refined once or twice, is the best for making soap.

That contains the most moisturising substances (squalene), or so.

The second oil is 'sweet almond oil'.

Slightly expensive oil.

From ancient times, it was used for washing hair of ladies.

This also contains plenty of moisturising substances.

The third oil is 'jojoba oil'.

It gives elasticity and shine to the skin.

Other than that, it removes the dirt clogging the pores, or so.

It doesn't irritate the skin either.

Above were the main ingredients.

Other than those, 'palm oil' is necessary to prevent soap from collapsing, and 'coconut oil' is added to improve the foaming.

Other than the oils, there are 'pure water' and 'sodium hydroxide'.

Pure water is water distilled to remove impurities.

Sodium hydroxide is a chemical that reacts with oil to make soap.

They can be bought from merchants, but since they're designated as toxic, I need to fill out a document when buying it.

I also have to be careful when using it.

With the above ingredients, I will be making soap.

"Be careful with sodium hydroxide."

"Alright."

"For your safety, you should place a cloth over your mouth."

Direct contact with sodium hydroxide causes burns. We have to be careful.

The burns are different from normal as well. It's called chemical burn.

While normal burns are caused by heat damaging the skin, chemical burns destroy the skin directly and can reach the depth of the body.

Since it's very dangerous, the merchant warned me to be careful.

"Sieg, since it's the first time you're making soap, can you only watch when I'm handling sodium hydroxide?"

"Alright."

First, to not breathe in sodium hydroxide, I covered my mouth and nose with a cloth.

Since sodium hydroxide corrodes iron and aluminium, I'll be using enamel bowls this time.

I put on gloves and spooned some sodium hydroxide into a bowl. I left that bowl in the snow for a while to cool it.

It was a little cold, but ventilation was necessary so I opened the window.

I added the sodium hydroxide into water and stirred well.

The bowl was getting hot. I brought snow from outside and cooled the bowl so that it would be a little warmer than the human skin.

In another bowl, I mixed olive oil, sweet almond oil and jojoba oil and warmed them by using a double boiler; after which I added in palm oil and coconut oil. For this too, I boiled until it was slightly warmer than the human skin.

Once the two mixtures were at about the same temperature, I slowly added in the lye while stirring the oils.

Once everything was poured in, I mixed them using a whisk.

This stirring process is also important for making soap.

If the ingredients are not mixed in properly, lumps or layers can form, resulting in problems when finishing the soap.

While chatting about such things, I continued to mix while swapping with Sieg sometimes.

On that bowl, I put a cloth over it and left it for a while.

I checked it once a while, and if the water and oil separated I would mix them again.

As I leave them, chemical reactions occur, a fight to become soap happening.

Half a day later, it will become a creamy liquid.

In rectangular frames, I applied jojoba oil and poured in the soap mixture.

If I don't add oil here, the soap won't come out.

Once they're dried for about four days in a dark and warm place, they can be separated from the frames.

"It should be complete after a month, I think?"

"It takes that much time?"

"Surprising, eh?"

Good soap requires the ingredients to have been turned hard properly.

Poorly made soap worsens the skin.

Especially, I heard that olive oil is slow to turn into soap. So I need to properly leave them for a longer time.

The longer the period, the softer and smoother the soap, with delicate foams.

“I see.”

“You have to be patient with making soap.”

The maturing will be done in a wooden box.

When I brought out the box I used before, there were soap from two years ago.

“Ohh, two years old soap!”

There was a bar of soap made from reindeer milk. It was in a well-ventilated place, so there were no molds either. Just in case, I split it with a knife, but the inside was clean as well.

I tried washing my hands with it.

“Ah, this feels alright. I think we can use it for washing our bodies.”

“Indeed. It really does moisten our skins. My skin has been getting rough recently, so it might be nice.”

“Eh, really?”

I thought that it wasn't different from usual, so when I leaned in to see her face, she got angry.

“But Sieg, your skin is beautiful..... mmf”

Before I could finish the sentence, she shut my mouth.

Sieg looked exasperated.

“Ritz, I was wondering from a while ago, but when do you observe those things.....?”

“Every day, sometimes.”

“.....”

When she let go, I let out a loud sigh.

“My eyes drift to pretty things, you see.”

“I get it.”

I was being honest, but she didn’t believe me.



The reindeer milk soap was well-received by the women.

Mother was happy that her skin became smooth.

Sieg said that she liked the foams.

“Ritchan, you’re making soap as well.”

“It’s to pass the time.”

“Mum too, will try making some after all this time!”

It seems like I lit a fire in mother.

Come to think of it, I have been using mother’s handmade soap a long time ago.

“Ritchan, why don’t you go in before the water cools?”

“Alright.”

I accepted mother’s offer and entered the bath.

Promptly, I decided to try using the soap from two years ago.

After dipping it in water, I created foams using my hands.

Soft, smooth and delicate foams were formed.

I could smell the nice scent of the soap.

I'm not sure about the changes to the skin though.

I wonder if women are more sensitive to that.

I washed my body more carefully than usual.

When I was about to wash my back, suddenly, there was a knock on the bathroom door.

It was Sieglinde-san.

“What is it?”

“Well, I was wondering if I should wash your back.”

“Eh, really!?”

Sieg washes my back like this sometimes.

She rolled her sleeves and trouser legs, and washed my back.

Her strength was just perfect, that it felt extremely good.

“Uwa~~ This is bliss~~”

Finally she poured some warm water over me.

“Sieg, thank you.”

“.....”

“Hm? Is something wrong?”

“Erm, I think I put a little too much strength, that your back is red now. I’m sorry.”

“Ah, it’s alright, it’s alright~ Thank you.”

Even though I said that, when I was in the bath my back stung a little.

This is also Sieg’s love.

I decided to think that.



Even after marrying, bathing remained a joy for me.

It’s refreshing and relieves fatigue.

Also, it makes me feel happy when Sieg washes my back like before.

As I dipped into the water, I thought yet again that bathing is great.

Chapter 120 - Spring is Coming

During the polar nights, everyone turns into master artisans.

The men carve wood to make tableware, and make various ornaments out of reindeer antlers.

The women create fine embroidery and tin bracelets.

We call those handicrafts duoji.

On grips and knife handles, pictures are carved in.

Reindeer, snow, sun, cradle, etc.. Meaningful patterns are carved in.

Then when it's spring, we open stalls at the flea market (kirpputori) and sell things.

During the polar nights, mother becomes full of motivation making bracelets. This year, she seems to be spending the time getting to be friendly with Sieg. How enviable.

I diligently carved wooden cups (kuksa) and wooden bears.

From noon to evening, I work at the store.

I rest three days a week. I thought that I would be alright since I had holidays, but even so I was rather busy.

However, it was a refreshing busyness.

Regardless of gender or age, many villagers as well as soldiers visited the store.

They all gathered at the store and brightened the mood.

I let out joyful screams.

As for the topic of discussion at 'The Crimson Eagle', it's mostly about how the handicrafts are coming along.

People said that they wanted to have an exchange, so I decided to open the store on a holiday and hold something like an exhibition. I'm participating too.

For reference, all the participants, including me, are old guys.

The next day.

Everyone placed their handicrafts on the tables.

This time, we displayed kuksas.

There were dozens of people crowding around tables freely placing their works, so no one could which one was whose. Though of course we know our own ones.

When placed like this, all of them are unique and interesting.

There are ones that are perfectly round, ones that have a lustre, ones that have beautiful handles, ones that took close care for the wood grain patterns, there were none that were alike.

“Hm? There’s one that has a peculiar picture carved onto it.”

The kuksa that was pointed to was mine.

“What, a bird..... is this a hawk?”

“It’s an eagle (kotka).”

Recently, I’ve been carving eagle pictures onto the handles. For me, eagles signify happiness.

Reindeer (poro) are a symbol of wealth. Snow (lumi) means patience. Sun (aurinko) represent the joy of bright life. There are many different wishes melded into the pictures, all depending on the region.

Raptors such as eagles and hawks are valiant creatures that drive away beasts.

Seeing a picture that was used before, everyone seemed interested.

“Come to think of it, there were quite a few tourists buying eagle carvings last year.”

“Aa, I heard about that too.”

They’re probably Sieg’s lady fans.

For the tourist season this year, I’m planning to increase goods with eagle motifs.

I explained the meaning of the eagle picture again.

“To explain, I used my wife as a model, or something like that,”

The crimson eagle that flew from her homeland and landed in a foreign land.

For me, that was the strong and beautiful sun that persisted through the polar nights, a miraculous figure as well as a symbol of happiness.

I presented the thoughts I had about the eagles in front the people.

No one ridiculed me.

They listened sincerely.

Then they said something wonderful.

“Hey, my lord, can I also carve eagles into my handicrafts?”

“Eh?”

“No, it’s alright if you don’t want to.....”

“Ah, I don’t dislike it. In fact, I’m happy!”

If everyone received the happy blessings of the eagle, I’ll be blissful.

When I put it that way, everyone said that they also wanted to carve eagles.

From this day on, there were many handicrafts with eagles in them.

The gallant eagle was also to the liking of the village men, that they actively carved eagles to their handicrafts.

I had not imagined then that a few years later the eagle of happiness would become a famous local product, and became to symbolise the whole village.

No one knows how life will turn out. This one sentence summarised everything.



As I spent the days busily, the polar nights ended.

For the rest of the winter, I spent the morning and evenings hunting, running the store as well, while desperately making handicrafts at night.

They were extremely dizzying days.

One day, when I woke up, there was a letter by my bedside.

It was from Sieg.

To see what it might be, I lit a lantern and opened it.

It said that she was worried for my health, that I should rest for at least a day.

She also said that it's painful to see me exhausted.

After reading Sieg's note, I came to. What should I say, I'm extremely tired.

Why is my body so heavy, when it's just the morning?

There could be only one answer. I overworked.

It's probably not just me. Mother and Sieg must be like that too.

Last night, everyone had blank expressions.

I finally realised.

Because I was working too hard, people around me could not rest either.

Furthermore, I didn't have time to leisurely spend time with my family.

It's before the prohibition period, so I hunted until the sun set, and thanks to 'The Crimson Eagle', I spend all days with dizzying business. Moreover, since it was close to the flea market opening, I was diligently making handicrafts late into the night.

In retrospect, Sieg visited the workshop many times and told me to rest, but I never listened.

Mother-in-law too snapped at me saying that overworking is not good, but I made the same mistake here as well. I have to reflect deeply.

Thankfully, today, 'The Crimson Eagle' is resting today.

Last night, the stars in the night sky could be seen so it will be clear today.

Today will be a good day for a picnic.

If that's decided, I'll have to prepare packed lunches.

I quickly dressed up and went down to the first floor.

In the kitchen, mother and Ruruporon were making breakfast.

"My, Ritchan, you're up early."

"Mum, let's go on a picnic today!"

"Eh?"

I picked up a chunk of smoked meat, a loaf of bread and some jam, and headed for the kitchen.

The smoked meat was sliced thickly and cooked on a skewer by the fireplace. I sliced the bread and spread jam on the slices.

Once the smoked meat was cooked, I made sandwiches with them.

Once the two kinds of bread are packed into the baskets, the packed lunch is complete.

It's a little poor, but I thought that things like these are good too sometimes.

As for Arno's portion, mother is making them while making breakfast.

Ten months old now, my son can now have baby food.

While I was packing the lunch in cloth, Sieg, who had Arno in her arms, returned from her morning stroll.

"Ritz, you're up early."

"Morning."

Sieg said the same thing as mother.

Do I sleep in that much?

Upon seeing the large packed lunch, she lobbed a question.

"Are you having a picnic with the villagers today?"

"No, no. I'm thinking of going with everyone here."

I received Arno and laid him in the cradle.

Then, I bowed to Sieg.

“Sieg, thank you.”

“Eh?”

“The letter..... I had been working too hard again.”

Sieg looked troubled.

Is she angry, I wondered, but she did not say anything.

“Sorry, making you worry all the time.....”

Sieg shook her head.

Then, without saying a word, she patted my shoulders.

I felt as though she was appealing that it was out of sympathy not out of worry.

“Thank you, Sieglinde.”

I was move so much that I could only say that.

I decided that I’ll have regular holidays and spend relaxing days with my family on those days.



Then, we started the fun fun picnic.

To watch out for wild animals, we brought about three dogs and proceeded through the forest full of fresh leaves.

I was taking care of Arno.

I had him in my embrace wrapped in a cloth hanging from my neck and under my arm.

Maybe because he likes the forest stroll, he had a very gentle countenance.

Mother was absorbed in picking flowers and decorating Sieg's hair with those.

Sieg was becoming even lovelier.

The destination this time is the secret flower field.

In the first spring with her, I was so busy that I did not have the time to go there.

It was relatively close from the village, so I chose the place out of the thought that it won't be a burden to mother and Sieg.

A few dozen minutes after leaving the village, we arrived at our destination.

"Waa, ama~zing!"

Mother let out a voice of excitement. Sieg too was occupied with the scenery in front of her.

There were countless dandelions (voikukka).

The yellow field stretching across the ground could only be described as amazing.

"Ritchan, you know a wonderful place."

"Yeah. I was thinking of coming here with everyone once it was spring."

"How long has it been since I last went out to see flowers~"

Seeing her chatting happily, I felt glad that I brought her here.

Mother said that she wants to hug Arno.

While embracing our treasure, she spoke while smiling.

“Arno-san, you can eat dandelions or even use them for medicine~”

It seems that she wants to educate him on the forest. *It's still early*, I laughed with Sieg.

Mother walked to the centre of the field of flowers with my son while humming.

A clean refreshing wind blew.

It was still a little chilly, but this is the spring of the remote land.

While feeling the season in the wind brushing my cheeks, we continued our flower viewing.

Sieg, while staring at the flowers, murmured something.

“Voikukka, ‘butter flower’, huh.”

“Right.”

The word for dandelion, voikukka, is composed of ‘voi’, meaning ‘butter’, and ‘kukka’, meaning ‘flower’.

It's named so since the colour is like butter.

There are many plant names originating from food.

All the people in this country must have insatiable appetites.

I picked one dandelion and placed it on Sieg's ear.

“.....Ritz, am I not in a predicament now?”

“There’s nothing like that.”

Mother planted about seven flowers into Sieg’s hair.

Any flower looked good on her.

Even though I said that, she did not look convinced.

To not know her own loveliness, how unfortunate.

Since it couldn’t be helped, I decided to convey it clearly.

I brushed back the red hair on her hair and softly whispered, “You’re cute.”

The way she dyes red immediately is just irresistible.

I then realised. That she is the loveliest flower in the world.

Without meaning to, I ended up fully enjoying the spring flower viewing.

I thought that it would be nice to spend the next year, at the same place, with the same family again.

Chapter 121 - Let's Become a Beekeeper

When the snow melted and fresh sprouts came out of the ground, it was finally the long-awaited season for beekeeping.

According to father's research, honeybees can survive the winter. Apparently, they huddle together and flutter their wings to keep the temperature of the hive around thirty degrees Celsius. They also stock up honey to survive the winter.

I promptly carried hives and headed for the forest.

I only made two so far. I carried one with a rope, and I carried the other in my hand.

Sieg said that she'll help too, but since her hair colour might agitate the bees I decided to do it alone.

I got wooden boxes from the shop lady to build the hives. At the side, I made square holes like windows as well as a small hole for the bees to enter through, then I cast a net over it.

Inside the hive, there needs to be basic frames for the bees to make their own combs. I made square frames and placed wooden sticks in a cross shape. I placed around six of them inside. They help stop the combs from collapsing.

The honeybees will create combs based on the frames and gather honey there. However, the honey won't be complete. The sugar content is low, being just nectar from flowers. From there, the substances will be changed many times inside the bees' bodies, warming and sweetening the honey.

Then I would gather that completed honey.

My father's paper had detailed description on how to collect honey. It mentions a centrifuge, where the combs are placed inside and spun to separate the honey from the combs.

It sounds really convenient, but I had no data for it so I can't make it.

Well, it's only the first year, so I decided to aim for getting honey.

The hives were placed in a field of flowers in the forest. The sunlight is good and the wind doesn't blow much, so it's the best place to make honey.

The next part is getting the bees.

In the hives, the remains of a hive with honey will be placed in to lure bees with the smell.

Few days ago, I happened to receive a honeycomb from Teoporon so I decided to use that.

After that, I visited the hive everyday. None of them had any honeybees migrated to them.

Since that didn't work, I moved on the next method.

After honeybees winter, the beehive is conceded to a new queen. The previous queen bee takes half the worker bees and makes a new nest.

The previous method was a tactic trying to lure wild bees, but that didn't work.

So this time, I decided to go for capturing a swarm.

In this period, it seems that honeybees gather in a spherical shape around the queen bee.

To protect the queen apparently.

I need to capture them in a net.

Since I am going to carry out the capture plan, I came heavily armed.

I attached a tightly woven net to a hat to keep them from approaching my face, and made sure no parts of my body was exposed.

I searched for the ball of honeybees in the forest. Swarm, to be accurate.

I found a beehive, but I could not find a ball of honeybees.

Since it was disappointing to just return like this, so I thought, *wont' the queen bee come out of the hive~* and observed the beehive hanging from a branch. However, an unexpected thing happened.

“—— Ouch!!”

A severe pain shot up from my calf.

I immediately realised that I was stung by a bee.

The thought that I would not be stung if I had thick winter clothing was a mistake it seems.

If I panic here, I might end up agitating the beehives hiding around the area. I decided to leave the area slowly.

I trod through the forests for a long time, but it was the first time I was stung by a bee.

A dull pain gradually grew from the stung part. I was told that stings have to be removed immediately, but I had to get away from the hive so I endured the pain.

I went to a stream and carefully rolled up my trouser. Of course, the stung part became swollen.

I couldn't see any stings.

I quickly washed the stung part with water. It was written that cold things are good for stings, so I had my foot in the water and waited.

Apparently honey works well for stings. It alleviates the pain somewhat, or so.

I tilted my head in wonder why I was stung, but thinking carefully, a human observing the hive can only be seen as suspicious. It's not strange that I was attacked.

Bees don't forgive those who aim for their hives.

So it can't be helped that I could be attacked. I reflected deeply.

Because I was stung by a honeybee today, my spirit was broken today. The sun was setting too, so I returned home after picking herbs.



“I’m back!”

When I returned, Sieg was doing the laundry. She had Arno on her back.

My son was sleeping soundly. Even when his eyes are closed, he’s surprisingly cute. That’s our son.

“Should I place Arno in the cradle?”

“Aa, can I ask you to do that?”

“Leave it to me!”

While supporting Arno with one hand, I loosened the cloth tied around Sieg’s belly.

A sleeping infant’s body is hot. Just touching him was relaxing.

I laid him down on the cradle in the living room and stared at his face.

Chubby, with slightly red cheeks. Just seeing his tightly clenched hands was healing.

As I stared at my son’s sleeping face, Sieg came back in.

“I laid out all the herbs in the basket for drying.”

“Thank you.”

Out of the herbs, there are ones that are dried and ones that are heated. Sieg seemed to be remembering the kinds perfectly, and her reaction was perfect as well.

“Sieg, it was no good again today.”

“I see.”

Unexpectedly, interacting with bees is hard. I felt that every day.

To be honest, I want to end the report there, but since I am beekeeping thanks to the cooperation of my family, so I shouldn't hide anything. I have to tell them about getting stung by a honeybee. I took a deep breath and spoke.

"T-Truth be told, I was stung by a honeybee for the first time in my life."

"What!?"

Sieg was worried, but getting stung by mistake was a very embarrassing affair.

"Where did you get stung? Any swelling?"

"It's alright."

"Show me."

"No, erm, hahaha."

I tried to laugh it off, but I got scolded and she demanded to see it.

After I rolled up my trouser, she knelt down on one knee and looked closely at the affected area.

"Any pain?"

"Nothing in particular."

"Any difficulty in breathing or dizziness?"

"None."

When I asked why she was worried about those things, she replied that it was because she once saw someone collapsing from a bee sting when she was in the army.

“It’s a rare case, but it seems that there are also cases where the body reacts harshly against stings, leading to death. I heard that from a doctor a long time ago.”

“I see.”

She told me to take care of my body if I get stung by a bee.

“I will.”

“Please do so.”

Then, Sieg brought over the medicine box she bought during our honeymoon and kindly applied ointment for bug bites and stings.

Once that was done, she placed the box back in the shelf and sat down next to me. She crossed her arms and started talking with a calm expression.

“If possible, I’d like to accompany you.....”

“H~m.”

Sieg’s hair colour triggers the defensive instincts of honeybees, and Arno doesn’t have resistance so we can’t go out together.

“Well, in this period, it can’t be helped now. But some day, I’ll also——”

“Yes, sure.”

If her hair is tidied properly and hidden under a hat, there shouldn’t be a problem. I felt happy that she was willing to help, so I think that it will be nice if we could do it together in the future.

Sieg looked at me with a surprised expression.

“What is it?”

“N-No, I just didn’t think you would let me help.”

“Though, that’s if gathering honey does succeed.”

Right. First, I have to capture honeybees. And another problem is safely getting to the honey collecting. The road to becoming a beekeeper is long.

“Until then, Sieg, please be a flower only for me.”

If it’s a flower blooming in a safe place, it would be reassuring since no other bugs will gather, but she is a hard worker and an active person. But that is also her good point.

She suddenly grew quiet, so when I looked at Sieg who was sitting next to me, her cheeks were dyed red.

“W-What’s wrong!?”

“It’s because Ritz said something absurd.”

I seems like she’s shy at being described as a flower.

Seeing that expression makes me embarrassed too.

“But it is the truth.”

I’m just an insect lured in by a large flower called Sieg.

However, I never did tell her that.

Even so, embarrassed Sieg is so cute, it’s something to die for.

When our eyes met, she turned away.

Even that cold attitude is cute!

I slowly and fully enjoyed Sieg making such unbearable reactions.

Chapter 122 - Let's Become a Beekeeper (Continued)

I reviewed the notes on not getting stung by bees, written as a part of father's paper.

First, use colours that do not stand out for the clothing.

I had been very neglectful about this. I went into the forest wearing clothes using blue and red fabrics.

Next, do not panic in front of bees. Observe the behaviour of the bees.

Even if they land on the clothes, they don't immediately sting. The bees also examine what kind of person is approaching them.

I think this will be hard. However, I'll try my hardest to not panic.

Regarding how I got stung recently, it seems that Sieg told mother.

"Ritchan, mum tried making a protective shade."

"Oh!"

It was a wide-rimmed hat with tightly woven net draped around.

The structure is made so that bees will not be able to pass through the small holes.

"This is amazing."

"I also made thick clothing out of white clothing, so please wear those."

"Thank you."

It was just layering more clothes, but it felt like my defences improved at once.

Even if bees approach, I think I can stay calm.

I uplifted my spirit and put on the protective clothing mother made. As I was putting on shoes for going out, Sieg and Arno came over to see me off.

“Ritz, I’m sure you know this, but please be careful.”

“Alright.”

It felt like Arno was cheering me on as well. I gently kissed him on the forehead and told him that I’ll be returning soon.

I then kissed Sieg on her cheek and headed out.

“See you later.”

“I’ll be off.”

I proceeded through the spring forest where the snow had not melted fully yet.

The objective this time is catching bees.

A queen bee is born once a year in a hive.

The previous queen takes half the worker bees and exits the hive.

I’ll be catching that swarm.

I carefully trod through the forest.

I saw a stray bee flying by, so I decided to tail it.

It seems that bees that leave their hives survey their area for potential settling areas. So if I chase them I’ll be able to find the ball of honeybees.

After persistently tailing the bee, I found a swarm hanging from a tree!

Fortunately, instead of a hive, it was close to where the wooden frame is so I decided to bring that.

I approached slowly and placed the wooden box with honey under the ball of bees.

If the bees notice the hive and move in, it will be a success.

If that doesn't work, I'll have to capture them myself.

It seems that bees in their balled up states are docile, but the thought of directly capturing them is nerve-wracking.

Please, settle in the box, I ended up praying.

I picked herbs for medicine and spices in the forest and returned home.

When I opened the front door, Sieg came running over.

"I'm back."

"Welcome back."

Without taking a moment to breath, Sieg asked if I wasn't stung by a bee.

Today, I had mother's protective clothing and I acted calmer than before so I was not stung.

When I said that, Sieg looked relieved.

"I see. I'm glad that you're alright."

".....Nn."

"What is it?"

"No, I was just happy."

Before, when I started something new, there were times when I would get injured during experiments or get myself into precarious situations.

Because results did not come out, I had spent lonely days applying medicine to my abrasions or stitching ripped clothes.

That was the norm. However, it's different now.

I had family, worrying about me, advising me, and cheering for me.

I really think that it's a blissful thing.

I decided to continue working hard for my family.

The next day.

I headed to the forest as my heart fluttered. I headed for the tree with the swarm of bees.

—— Found it!

From afar, there was no ball of bees.

Swarms don't linger in one place. They fly away after about two days.

So I didn't get expectant just because they weren't there.

I slowly approached the hive and peeked into it.

“.....!”

I almost cried out, but I swallowed it back in just before it came out.

Something amazing's going on! There are bees in the box!

I was so happy that I could not calm down.

I ran back home straightaway and told Sieg and mother.

“Your efforts are coming to fruition. It’s a good thing.”

“Thank you.”

It is a good thing to be able to say there is progress.

Because I was praised by Sieg, my cheeks became loose.

This was just the first step in beekeeping, but the joy kept overflowing and did not stop.

I suddenly was motivated a lot more.

I increased the number of hives and repeated the process of placing them under bee swarms.

Out of the six I made in total, three were settled.

I scoured the forest to capture other bees using a net, but it was already the past period that I couldn’t find the bees.

For this year, I’ll be keeping bees in three hives.

Spring is the season where the queen bee lays eggs and the season where honey is gathered.

There’s not much I can do.

I could only wait for the worker bees to gather honey.



There are many things I have to do in spring.

Collecting birch sap, picking herbs and fragrant grasses.

Doing maintenance of the fence at the forest of the reindeers, milking, marking the ears, there was a mountain of work.

I shortened the business hours of 'The Crimson Eagle' and increased the holidays.

There were many times when a villager would ask, "It's open today, right?" only to return disappointed.

I felt sorry, but I was glad that they wanted a place like that.

I really wanted to open the store as much as possible, but there wasn't much I could do.

I really need someone to help.

Meanwhile, good news arrived.

Aina and Emmerich is returning soon.

It's been a year and half since they left.

The Bergholm family is now completely in peace.

It was worrying that the grandfather's condition was worsening, but he still had food and Aina's mother is working hard.

I tried to provide food for them, but they declined saying that they had savings.

It seems that they had been selling the prey Aina's grandfather sold and saved the money they made.

They said that there was no need for worry.

Just in case, I told them that they can rely on me.

I had been watching the Bergholm family for a long time, but I was surprised at Aina's mother's strength.

The courage to let go of her precious daughter, the spirit to take care of the whole family, and the willpower to keep on living in good health.

I think that it's all very praiseworthy.

Her efforts changed Bergholm family.

I think that it would be nice if Aina and Emmerich returned quickly and they would rely on each other.

There was also a small change in our family too.

Twice a week, all the family will be resting.

On holidays, we won't be doing anything. That was what we decided. Cooking, housework and looking after the dogs will be done by the people of the Rango family.

On holidays, we go out strolling to the fields, go out shopping to the port city, or play with Arno.

However, I was still not used to 'spending a holiday' so there were many times when I was scolded by mother or Sieg because I accidentally chopped firewood.

When I said that not working is hard, Sieg ended up laughing.

"Ritz, don't you have a hobby?"

"Playing with Sieg or Arno, maybe?"

"That's service to the family. Not a hobby."

"Th-That can't be!"

It seems that hobbies are things that people enjoy for themselves.

“Ritz, you should spend your time doing something you like.”

“Something I like.....”

“Is there something?”

“Watching Arno, strolling together, talking with Sieg, touching Sieg, or kissing Sieg.”

“.....That’s also service to the family.”

The times when I am with my family are the most healing moments.

Then my hobby is: service to the family. I think that’s fine.

Therefore, I’ll be having time pursuing my hobby.

Arno was out strolling with mother.

So I decided to caress Sieg.

I put my arm around her and hugged her gently. I stroked her hair and brought her cheek to my neck.

Sieg’s skin is smooth and feels good.

Her hair is also fluffy and feels good to touch.

“Ritz, are you happy with that?”

“Yup, I’m happy!”

This indeed is the happiest time in my life.